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SERMONS

BY THE LATE

REV. PHILIP HENRY, A. M.

EIGHTEEN

SERMONS,

BY THE

REV. PHILIP HENRY, A.M.

FORMERLY
OF CHRIST CHURCH COLLEGE, OXFORD.

SELECTED

From his Original Manuscripts.

ALSO,

TWO SERMONS

PREACHED

ON HIS DEATH:

THE ONE,

BY THE REV. FRANCIS TALLENTS, A.M.

Fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge:

THE OTHER,

BY THE REV. MATTHEW HENRY, V.D.M.

Now first published.

WITH NOTES,

BY

J. B. WILLIAMS.

His preaching was plain and pleasant, warm and savoury, full and overflowing ..... such as few could reach, and greatly blessed by God.

MR. TALLENTS.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY ELLERTON AND HENDERSON,
Johnson's Court, Fleet Street,

FOR JOSIAH CONDER, 18, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD,
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1816.

PREFACE.

THE Volume now ushered into the world will, it is hoped, meet with a welcome reception. It contains a statement of scriptural and important truths, by a "minister of the sanctuary" whose praise has long been in the churches.

The Jansenists * speak of an *unction*—an excitement to piety and devotion—in the written compositions of spiritual minds. There doubtless is such a thing. It is exemplified in the writings of a Hall, a Baxter, a Howe, a Watts, and many other eminent Divines; and, in no small degree, in the Sermons of *Philip* Henry.

This excellent man is too well known to need any encomium; and there is cause for

* Concerning this sect of Christians, see Jortin's *Six Dissertations*, Dissert. II. p. 99. edit. 1755; *Encyclopæd. Brit.* vol. IX. p. 62.

thankfulness that so much to encircle him with rays of blessedness has been preserved by one, who, from personal knowledge and gracious endowments, was able to write with accuracy and with wisdom. Few readers, it is presumed, are unacquainted with the Reverend Matthew Henry's Life of his truly honoured father. Should there be any who need a recommendation to that interesting volume, a fourth and improved edition of which was published by the Reverend Job Orton, it cannot be better made than in the words of the late Reverend Edward Williams, D.D. "It is," said that pious writer, "a *beautiful delineation* of primitive Christianity, and the power of godliness;—where social religion, as well as personal holiness, are drawn to the life, and eminently *exemplified*;—where, in a word, the doctrine *of the life of God in the soul of man* derives a striking proof, and a venerable sanction *."

* Morrice's *Social Religion Exemplified*, Preface, p. xv. edit. 1786, note.

The first of the sermons in this volume was preached by Mr. Tallents, who was a Divine of extensive learning, singular prudence, and elevated piety. He was Mr. Henry's intimate friend and companion in tribulation, and a considerable sharer in the sufferings of the Nonconformists. In the year 1662 he was ejected from St. Mary's Church in Shrewsbury; and, after labouring honourably in the Gospel Ministry among Dissenters, in that town, till the year 1708, entered upon his eternal rest, in the 89th year of his age*. The Sermon, now first printed, he preached at Broad Oak, and afterwards prepared it for the press; but it was not published, for reasons which will be seen by the letter he addressed to Mr. Matthew Henry, and which is transcribed from the original manuscript. The letter bears date Oct. 7th, 1696.

"I readily comply with your desire and

* *Nonconformists' Memorial*, vol. III. p. 153; *Matt. Henry's Misscellaneous Works*, Messrs. Burder and Hughes's edition, p. 782. In both these volumes there is an edifying Memoir of Mr. Tallents.

Dr. Tylston's* advice, not to print my sermon—at least for the present. The age is critical, and many will be very industrious to seek matter of cavil and reproach; and some things you think not so proper to be spoken to the world. I have therefore run it over again, and see nothing but what, with a few explicatory necessary words inserted, might be very passable and useful. I thought I dealt very gently with those that had abused him, but judged it necessary to say something of it, for their good as well as others; and if they will be angry instead of repenting, why should we be afraid? But in suppressing it, I shall avoid censures (though I do not much fear them), and please you, my friends, and do nothing that you judge may hinder the work of God in that neighbourhood. I shall review and write it over again, that any may read it, if they desire, for their good."

No apology can be necessary for introducing it in the present volume.

* Mr. Henry's excellent son-in-law.

More than a century has elapsed since Mr. Henry left this world; and though, under the influence of Christian humility, he carefully concealed all his productions from public inspection, yet, since the excellence of these compositions is calculated, by a Divine blessing, to benefit mankind, it would seem unjust any longer to withhold them from general perusal. It may, indeed, be matter of surprise, that things so valuable should till now have remained concealed; and the Editor "cannot," to borrow the words of Dr. Doddridge on his publishing the works of Archbishop Leighton, "but consider it as a great *honour* conferred upon him by Providence, to have been an instrument of presenting" Mr. Henry's Sermons, in so tolerably correct a form, to the world.

The present publication was undertaken at the request of many whose judgment and piety cannot be justly questioned, and with a confident expectation that the infinitely wise JEHOVAH, who so highly distinguished his servant when on earth, will gra-

ciously bless, now he is in heaven, these memorials of his learning and godliness to many souls. The truths enforced are not, it is admitted, decorated with the ornaments of rhetoric; but the holy zeal, the convincing reasoning, and powerful appeals, discovered in the statement of them, will be a commendation to those who seek Divine knowledge, and thus tend to make men "wise unto salvation."

These Sermons were carefully transcribed by the Editor from Mr. Henry's own handwriting. No alterations have been made, except what appeared to be absolutely needful—such as occasionally completing a sentence, and substituting, in a few instances, a word in more common use for one now become obsolete. Mr. Tallents's Sermon was transcribed from a copy which had the last corrections of the author; and the concluding Discourse, by Mr. Matthew Henry, appears from a copy made by the Reverend Mr. Stedman* from the original manuscript.

* A.M., the respected Vicar of St. Chad, Shrewsbury.

The Editor cannot conclude this Preface without offering, thus publicly, his grateful acknowledgments to Mrs. Brett, of West Bromwich, Staffordshire, the venerable descendant of Mr. Henry—to Mr. Stedman, who, amidst his various and important avocations, has added to other instances of his friendship the revising of the manuscript now printed—and to those other friends, with whose communications he has, on this occasion, been favoured. May the undertaking be crowned with the Divine blessing!

J. B. WILLIAMS.

Shrewsbury,
October 9th, 1815.

CONTENTS.

SERMON BY THE REV. F. TALLENTS.

Preached June 27, 1696, at Mr. Henry's Funeral.

Romans viii. 23.—And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body ... Page 1

SERMONS BY MR. HENRY.

SERMON I.

Preached Jan. 13th, 1657.

Psalm xxiii. 1.—The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want 33

SERMON II.

Preached April 3d, 1659.

Genesis xxxix. 9.—How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? 49

SERMON III.

Preached December 4th, 1659.

Revelations iii. 14—18.—And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith

the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked ..... Page 80

SERMON IV.

Preached November, 1669.

Psalm lxxvii. 19.—Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known 100

SERMON V.

Preached April 25th, 1672.

John viii. 37.—But ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you 119

SERMON VI.

Preached March 28th, 1680.

Galatians ii. 20.—And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God..... 141

SERMON VII.

Preached January 2d, 1681.

Luke xi. 1.—And it came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples 158

SERMON VIII.

Luke xxii. 44.—Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly 178

SERMON IX.

1 *Peter* i. 9.—Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls .....Page 191

SERMON X.

Preached April, 1692.

Ezekiel xvi. 2.—Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations 209

SERMON XI.

Preached on a Fast-day, July 12th, 1693.

Zephaniah iii. 2.—She obeyed not the voice 226

SERMON XII.

Preached on a Fast-day, August 9th, 1693.

Zephaniah iii. 2.—She received not correction 242

SERMON XIII.

Preached on a Fast-day, Sept. 13th, 1693.

Zephaniah iii. 2.—She trusted not in the Lord 260

SERMON XIV.

Preached July 30th, 1693.

Matthew v. 3.—Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven..... 277

SERMON XV.

Preached at the Funeral of the Rev. Samuel Taylor, June 28th, 1696.

2 *Corinthians* iv. 7.—But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us 297

SERMON XVI.

Preached October 27th, 1695.

2 *Chronicles* xxx. 8.—And serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you ..... Page 319

SERMON XVII.

Preached February 2d, 1696.

Romans xiii. 13.—Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying 334

SERMON XVIII.

MR. HENRY'S LAST SERMON.

Preached June 21st, 1696.

2 *Peter* i. 5.—Add to your faith, virtue 350

MR. MATT. HENRY'S FUNERAL SERMON FOR HIS FATHER.

Preached July 8th, 1696.

1 *Corinthians* xv. 55.—O death, where is thy sting?... 369

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT BROAD OAK, JUNE 27, 1696.

AT

THE FUNERAL

OF THE

REVEREND PHILIP HENRY, A. M.

BY

FRANCIS TALLENTS, A. M.

SERMON

AT THE

FUNERAL OF MR. HENRY.

ROMANS viii. 23.

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

THE end of this our meeting is to shew our love and honour to our deceased friend, and to get some spiritual good for ourselves. Not to stir up your sorrow, for that is full enough already; or to commend him, for that is needless among you: but that we may be gainers by such strokes, by this especially; and that by *this sadness our hearts may be made better.*

We read that Moses, in a time of sickness and death, prayed to the Lord, saying; "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Ps. xc. 12. Now if Moses,

that great and excellent servant of God, prayed that he himself, among others, might be wiser and better by the death of others, how much more may I and you? For we have buried wives, and husbands, and children, and friends, as dear to us as our own selves, yet how little or nothing have we been made better by it!

That we may profit by this our meeting, I shall pass by the coherence of the words and many other affecting matters, and with all plainness and brevity do these things:

I. Shew you, briefly, from the words, some useful lessons, and apply them.

II. Shew you some things in our deceased brother, to set those lessons deeper on our hearts, and make us profit by the sad occasion.

III. Give you some advice and exhortations in four or five particulars, which may be useful for all, and for you of this neighbourhood especially.

I. *For the first*, observe three things.

1. Every one that is in Christ, that believes in Christ, hath the *first-fruits* of the Spirit in him—hath the Spirit of God and of Christ in him in some measure: the *first-fruits* of the Spirit, though not the full harvest of it. So the text: and more fully in the ninth verse; "If any man

hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." What can be more plain and peremptory? They are quickened of the Spirit, and born again of the Spirit, and have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, as it is in verse the 11th.

Is it so? Then have we the Holy Spirit of God in us? — the first-fruits of the Spirit, the Spirit in some measure, some portion of it at least? *Have we*—you that have enjoyed the ministry of this servant of God so long, and others of us? How may we know it?

Look into your hearts. Look well there. How shall we truly know what is within us, except we carefully look into ourselves? But O how backward are we, how slight are we, in doing that!

Look into your *lives*, and see what comes out from your hearts. Do we walk after the Spirit? (as it is in verses 1st and 4th.) Do we mind the things of the Spirit? What do we chiefly mind, my brethren? It is said, "They that are after the flesh, mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the *things of the Spirit.*' Now, do we mind the things of the Spirit? Do we mind them mainly and chiefly, though but poorly; or, do we not, indeed, mind chiefly the things of the flesh? Do we mortify the deeds of the body, the sad remainders of our corruptions in us? "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the

body, ye shall live." What do we in this, my brethren?

Have we the spirit of prayer—the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father? see ver. 15. I wander not abroad to gather straw for bricks; we have abundance of excellent matter at hand, in this chapter, to supply us. Have we this spirit of adoption in any measure? Are our mouths and hearts opened, in some little degree at least, to pray, and with some hopes to speed, through Jesus Christ?

Do we suffer with Christ? Are we willing—nay, and desirous too—to suffer for Christ? It is said, verse 17th, we are children, " and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." O wondrous thing! Oh, then, who would not suffer with Christ, and for Christ? How sweet is that! How good is that! He that hath the Spirit of Christ doth this, will gladly do this, and be a companion of those that do this. Let us bless God if we have done this in any measure, and beg his strength that we may do it more and more, if he shall call us to it.

Now, my brethren, let us look well as to this. Many (even of those that hear good ministers, and rejoice in them too) are sensual—are sensual, and have not the Spirit: have not the Spirit of

Christ, but of the world, and chiefly mind the things of the world.

Let us, therefore, look well as to this; and let me tell you, what perhaps you do not so well consider, it is our fault if we have not the Spirit. I say again, it is our fault if we have not the Spirit; for it is said, Prov. i. 23, "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

If we have not turned at God's call, and so his Spirit be not poured out upon us, let us see it is our sin, and mourn for it as *our sin*, and seek it. But if we have this blessed Spirit in any measure, let us rejoice and give thanks, and strive to keep it as our greatest treasure. For

2. They that are in Christ, and have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and suffer for Christ, have a right to the greatest blessings here and hereafter for evermore.

One of these blessings is expressed in the text, and in effect includes all the others that are mentioned in the context: they are freed from condemnation: "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." O the greatness of this blessing!—to be freed from condemnation! How doth a poor broken heart rejoice in that!

They shall be raised up to glory; for it is said,

verse 11, " If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by [or because of] his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Mind that well, my brethren; mind it well, and be amazed. What a wonderful truth is this! He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken our mortal bodies. What a substantial and solid ground of comfort! O dwell on this often, my brethren, for your strength and joy.

They are children and heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ: so it is in verses 16 and 17; " The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." O happy they that have this witness in any measure! O cherish and improve it. " And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ!" How great is that! and who of us doth believe it, can believe it, with application to himself, to any great purpose?

Lastly. They shall be glorified together with Christ, and with a wondrous glory: (verses 17, 18;) " If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." O that we could, that we did, *consider* this—and in our very hearts. How would it affect us!

In the 19th and 21st verses he mentions the manifestation of the sons of God, and the glorious liberty of the children of God; and in my text he calls it "the adoption:"—"We groan within ourselves, *waiting* for *the adoption*." What! have we not the adoption *now?* Yes—but not the inheritance to which we are adopted: therefore it is here explained, and called the "redemption of our body." But it may be said, 'Are not our bodies redeemed already?' Yes: Christ hath paid the price; therefore death shall not always keep us under his power: but we have not yet the thing that was paid for. Christ's sacrifice would have been in vain, if we should not have the fruit of it—deliverance from sin, and misery by it—even the full adoption and redemption of our bodies.

Is it so? Then we are to *know* this: to know it, and to *think* of it often and much for our good. So the saints of old did, and so should we. How happy and strong are we, when, through grace, we do it in any measure! In the latter end of this chapter, how does the Apostle triumph, and teach us to do so too! see verse 21st to the end of the chapter. And again, in the fifth chapter, ver. 1, 2; "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with

hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. v. 1. So, also, in Colos. i. 27; "Christ in you the hope of glory." St. Peter also saith, "We are begotten again to a lively hope....to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us."

3. They that are in Christ, and have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and suffer with Christ, and know the things that are freely given to them, groan within themselves, and wait for the redemption of their bodies.

This is plain, from the words themselves and their coherence. In the former verses, from the 19th to my text, it is said, that "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God; for the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly:" but it "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." And, that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in birth until now." How can that be? I answer, by a natural instinct; for though those creatures have not knowledge and understanding, yet they have a natural inclination, or instinct, that makes them groan for a happiness. And, saith the Apostle here, "Not only they, but we ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves"—mark the expres-

sion, we ourselves groan within ourselves—" waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."—You will say, 'Do believers always groan for this actually, and in a great measure?' No. No graces are always *actually* exercised; but they are *habitually* always, and actually on several occasions, though not always with the same earnestness.

This is done two ways—By a natural instinct of the Spirit of God in them; for the Holy Spirit of God often works in us *per modum naturæ*—we know not how; and, by his rational workings in us by the word, by the precious promises and truths in it.

It may be asked, 'What things doth the Spirit of God make use of, to work those groans and desires in us?' The Spirit of God works these in us by three things especially.

(1.) By a sense of sin that is yet in us.—This makes us often groan, and cry out " O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

(2.) By a sense of afflictions, which are always in some sort, and sometimes very great.—So the text fully, and so verse 26, where it is said, that in this case " the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities;" that is, helps us against our infirmities; which are often so heavy, that we " know not what we should pray for as we ought." Alas! that is our very case often. " But the Spirit itself maketh

intercession for us,"—in a way far beyond our power, "with groanings which cannot be uttered,"—which we cannot utter or express; "but God, who searcheth the heart," knoweth them, though we are far short of knowing them fully, and easeth and strengtheneth our souls by them.

(3.) By a sense of our absence from God, and a taste of that great rest and happiness which we shall have with him.—So the Apostle: "We *know* we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"—O that *we* knew this more!—"For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. And he gives the reason ver. 6; "Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." Alas! we find it so. Nay, blessed be God if we do find it so. Therefore he adds, ver. 8; "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Gracious souls often sigh for this with the Apostle, and say with the Psalmist, "When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness." That they want, that they long for, and that makes them groan.

Use 1. How much of this knowledge of this groaning and waiting is there in us? Look well into your hearts, you that have been hearers of this excellent minister of Christ.

'Little, or none,' may some say. If so, what a shame is it! You will say, perhaps, these are high things, great things. True, they are so. But hath your faithful and beloved teacher, whose loss we now lament, taught you only *low* things, only the smaller things? No, my brethren, he hath taught you these things; and many of you, I trust, have learned them of God by him: though in his wisdom and tenderness he had milk for babes, and taught people as they were able to bear it.

It may be objected, 'But do the truly faithful, that have the Spirit of God, *always* groan for the adoption, the redemption of their bodies?' They do it always *habitually*, more or less, as I have said. There is something in them that makes them do so. But not always actually, for no grace whatever is always in act. Nay, the evils contrary to those graces often stir very much. So in this: gracious persons are often afraid of being dissolved; are willing, nay, and desirous, to be here; and cry, "O spare me a little, that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more seen." And whence is this? Because sin prevails, and grace is not acted; because corruption doth not then trouble them, nor afflictions grieve them; they have some ease, peace, rest from them, and therefore they do not groan for this.

Use 2. Seek after this blessed frame; to get, pre-

serve, and increase it: and let us seek to have it even in the midst of our ease and comforts, for it may be had even then: and this is the joy of our joys, and the life of our lives, and fitteth us for every thing. And if we have not sensible joys and comforts, nay if we have some fears, yet let us seek after the groanings and longings mentioned in the text; after the Spirit's helping our infirmities with sighs and groans; after that blessed rest with God which will fit us to live cheerfully and usefully, and to die joyfully. And if we learn this in some measure better than formerly, we shall be gainers now: which is, at least should be, the chief end of this our meeting. This leads me to the second general head. I proposed to shew

II. Some things in our deceased brother, to set these lessons deeper in our hearts, and to make us profit by this sad occasion.

The consideration of the spirit and life of this eminent servant of God, now taken from us, will greatly lead us to these things;—to believe in Christ; to have the spirit of Christ, and live after it; to suffer with Christ; and to groan for our adoption, that we might be with God. And what would you have more? Yet all these you may learn by him: not only by his excellent preaching, but by his holy living and happy death. And

herein I shall not enlarge upon many things, as I might with much profit, but only touch upon a few.

When he was young, and at Westminster School, he was awakened, and sought after God; and afterwards at Oxford, whither he went at fifteen years old, he continued and grew therein. He was not drawn away, though endangered for a time, by the vain company which used to abound among youths when many are together, or by other temptations; but he gained more knowledge and love to the things of God. He chose Christ, a despised and hated Christ, and cleaved to him.

When he came into the country, which is now forty-three years ago, it was but to a place * of about a hundred pounds a year, with this incumbrance to it, to teach two or three young gentlemen †;—a small matter for a student of Christ Church, and one of his parts and eminence, and that stood so fair for greater things: but so soon he began, not to seek great things for himself, but to set about his Master's work, that had called him. When the dismal Bartholomew-day came, now almost thirty-four years ago, he cleaved to the good

* Worthenbury, in Flintshire, whence he was ejected. See his Life, chap. III. and V.

† The sons of his patron, Judge Puleston, who lived in the parish. See his Life, chap. III.

way of God, which he had loved and owned; and chose rather to suffer affliction with a great *many** of the people of God, than to enjoy the riches and honours he might have had.

He that had such abilities, and that might have made such an interest—for his father was a servant to and sufferer for King Charles the First; and he, when young, had been a play-fellow with the young princes, afterwards the late King Charles the Second and King James the Second—neglected it, and accounted all such hopes but loss

* Upwards of *two thousand* "worthy, learned, pious, and orthodox divines," were ejected from the Church of England by the Act of Uniformity, August 24, 1662. "They were," says Dr. John Taylor, "prepared to lose all, and to suffer martyrdom itself, and actually resigned their livings (which, with most of them, were, under God, all that they and their families had to subsist upon,) rather than sin against God, and desert the cause of civil and religious liberty. They had the best education England could afford; most of them were excellent scholars, judicious divines, pious, faithful, and laborious ministers; of great zeal for God and religion; keeping close to their people in the worst of times. Particularly, they were men of great devotion and eminent abilities in *prayer*, uttered, as God enabled them, from the abundance of their hearts and affections; men of divine eloquence in pleading at the Throne of Grace; raising and melting the affections of their hearers, and being happily instrumental in transfusing into their souls the same spirit and heavenly gift." Scripture Account of Prayer, p. 50.—For an edifying and interesting account of these worthies, see the Nonconformists' Memorial, 3 vols., by the late Rev. Samuel Palmer.

for Christ. He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures he might have got in England. And what reproaches and hard measure he met with afterwards, you know; though he was the meekest, and most harmless, obliging man that might be. He had good store of these from several people—neglects, contempt, abuse, and threats; from gentry (though, to the honour of divers of them in the neighbourhood, it must be said they were far from it); from ministers, that should have known better; and from people of all sorts; and from some that he had in a special manner deserved well from. He had not only reproaches, but injuries several ways. He was fined for meeting to pray for rain in a great drought: his goods and corn on the ground were seized and carried away; and himself at other times imprisoned. About this very time eleven years ago, he was prisoner in Chester Castle, and crowded up in close, narrow rooms, with many other worthy persons, far from enjoying such liberty and fairness as others, when imprisoned, have had. But now he is far above all these, and rests, we trust, with God; while you and I, who was eleven years older than he, are yet conflicting here below. On this occasion, I may mention one of my own trials. As upon this very day eleven years, I was committed prisoner at Shrewsbury, whither I went to inter my holy wife, who

going thither, died suddenly; and, after eleven or twelve days, was sent thence to Chester Castle. O the dismal time that then was, and the sad prospect of things then! And O the unexpected quiet we had soon after, and the wonderful changes we have seen since; and the great liberties we enjoy this day! Let us think of these things. Let us not forget them; but consider them well, that we may learn to admire and fear, and rejoice and trust in God, and live to him who rules and doth great things. To him be praise for ever and ever. But to return to the remembrance of our holy friend, deceased—

Remember his preaching: his labour, and diligence, and pains, and unweariedness, and excellency in that. But why should I speak to you of this? You may say—"We know it better than you; we have heard him oftener, nay, constantly; and our souls, through grace, feel it! I shall, therefore, only speak this word. His expounding and preaching was plain and pleasant, warm and savoury, full and overflowing, and such as few could reach, and greatly blessed by God.

But mind, my brethren, call to mind his holy living—his walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit—the graces of God, and the fruits of the Spirit that were visible in him. I may speak to you concerning him, as the blessed Apostle doth of himself to the Philippians. "Those things which

you have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." He, when here present among you, was far from saying so of himself, so great was his modesty and true humility. But I may now truly say it in his name. "Those things which you have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in *him*, do." Mind them. Do them, "and the God of peace shall be with you." 'How,' may some say, 'can the God of peace be with us now he is gone? Can we look for it?' Yes, my brethren; for *Christ* lives though *he* be dead. Christ hath promised it, and it shall be. After blessed Paul was dead, the Philippians had it, and so shall you, if you go in that way; and God grant you may.

Remember, remember, my brethren, his piety towards God in his person, in his family, and every where; his soberness to himself in every thing; his justice and charity towards all. You are witnesses of these things, and how he minded in them the things of the Spirit.

Remember how humble and meek he was; how kind and patient, how wise and charitable. Not proud and high, not fierce and threatening, not hard and covetous, not foolish and conceited. He was no proler, nor a man of designs. Remember this, and draw strength from Christ for this.

And what are the fruits of the Spirit? See

Gal. v. 22. "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." And surely these fruits of the Spirit, if in any among us, were eminently in him.

Besides, he was a friend, and a counseller, and a father to many; especially to two worthy widows and their children here present, and by occasion of them to divers others.

But I injure things by my haste. I desire you also to consider for your good, that while he denied himself and worked for God, God had a visible care of him, and gave him an excellent wife, that brought him a handsome estate, and built up his house; and good children; a son that worthily rises up in his stead, and four daughters, all comfortably disposed of. When he died, he left them a Father; for they are all, as we have reason to hope, born again; and so have God for their Father. A mercy that God hath denied to many of his choicest ones. See, and learn to trust in him.

But to conclude this head—Let us mind his groaning and waiting for his change, and preparation for it. *This*, which you may justly look upon as a great thing, was also eminently in him. You may have many evidences of it. I will give you two or three very clear ones, which I certainly know. For some years past, I have seldom seen him. The last time was just a year ago, June

28th, 1695, at the funeral of our reverend and holy brother, Mr. Taylor of Wem*. I cannot mention *him* without being affected. He was sickly in body, melancholy in mind, poor, and even of no estate: he had a great burden of children, and was too much neglected by divers, not all, in that place, who professed to be religious. Thus he was, though a holy man, a savoury preacher, and dear to God. Let *his* memory, also, and example, be precious to you; and a blessing be from the Lord on all that truly honoured him, and forgiveness to those who too lightly esteemed him.

But to return—For some years, of late, I seldom saw my dear and honoured friend and brother, Mr. Henry, for so he was pleased oftentimes to call me. But we often visited each other by letters, and many excellent ones of his I have yet by me. In part of the years 1693 and 1694, he used to date his letters thus—such a day of the month, and such a day of my dying (that is, his climacteric) year. As for example, to mention but two: 'January 1st, 169$\frac{4}{}$ the 130th day of my dying year.' 'August 13th, 1694, the 355th day of my dying year.' Thus all the days of his appointed time he waited with comfort, and prepared for his change: and thus handsomely taught me and my dear wife, his special friend, to *number*

* See Mr. Henry's sermon on the occasion. Sermon XV.

our days with him, and to prepare for eternity. O that we may all be quickened by this to the same thing!

In his last kind and excellent letter, dated May 28th, a month ago, he hath this heavenly passage: 'Methinks it is strange, that it should be your lot and mine, to abide so long on earth by the stuff, when so many of our friends and fellow-soldiers are dividing the spoil above: but God will have it so; and to be willing to live in obedience to his holy will, is as true an act of grace as to be willing to die when he calls, especially when life is labour and sorrow. But when it is labour and joy, service to his name, and some measure of success and comfort in serving him; when it is to stop a gap, and stem a tide; it is to be rejoiced in—it is heaven upon earth: nay one would think, by the Psalmist's often-repeated plea, Psalms vi. xxx. lxxxviii. cxv. and cxviii. that it were better than to be in heaven itself. And can that be?' And, after other encouraging words, he concludes thus: 'Go on, brother; go on, and live to Christ: let him be your life.' Thus was he raised, thus did he live.

For some weeks before his translation, he was observed by several to be more lively in his preaching than before. He continued in his usual health till Tuesday last; and, after worshipping God in his family, went up into his chamber. Not

coming down to breakfast, his dear wife went up and found him lying on his bed, and ill. His pains grew very great, so that he was not able to speak much: he had done that before. He lasted fifteen or sixteen hours only, notwithstanding all means used; for soon after twelve, on Wednesday morning, God took him to his rest. His last words were, "O death, where is thy"—sting, he would have said, but was not able to pronounce it.

Happy, happy he that so dies! A sign that he died daily, and groaned for the adoption, and was fitted for it. Let us labour and strive, and hope for the like presence and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ at our death, and to eternal life.

III. I proposed to give you some advice and exhortations in four or five particulars, which may be useful for us; and for you of this neighbourhood especially.

1. Give thanks to God that ever you had him or saw him; and that you had him so long—thirty years and more in this place; notwithstanding all the difficulties of the times; and that, when other eminent servants of God were driven away, and taken away by death. First, the famous Mr. Porter, who was so useful at Hanmer, and afterwards at Whitchurch;—the excellent and faithful Mr. Parsons of Wem;—the savoury and pleasant

preacher, Mr. Steel;—the warm and substantial Mr. Edward Lawrence. How these three last were forced away, and, having been useful in London, ended their days there, you know, and will do well to remember. Also the worthy Mr. Richardson, and Thomas, and Sadler, and Taylor, who died among you*. Admire it, and give thanks to God, that he should continue this excellent person among you, and in life so long. O how hath this side of the country been blessed with excellent ministers for many years! Let us give thanks to God for that, and for this servant of the Lord especially. Do not many of you owe even your very souls to him and them, under God? Doth not this numerous assembly and your great affection shew it? Yes, surely. Yet while you mourn give thanks to God, and that from your hearts, that you ever knew him. 'What! give thanks now?' Yes, old and great mercies must be thankfully remembered.

2. Rejoice, and give thanks to God, for the glory that we hope he now enjoys.

Weep not for him, but "weep for yourselves." Do you not, many of you, remember that excellent sermon† he preached on those words, not much

* An interesting account of the ministers here mentioned, may be seen in the last chapter of P. Henry's Life, and in the Nonconformist's Memorial, vol. III.

† The heads of it are preserved in the 'Life of Mr.

above a year ago, at the funeral of that holy, useful man, Mr. William Lawrence of Wem? I say, of that active, humble, understanding man, who, I may affirm, without offence, hath left few of his rank equal to him. O how good is it to remember such! Do you not, I ask, remember the excellent sermon preached by him who is now deceased? Yes, you remember it. Many of you have it in your books *; many of you, I hope, in your hearts. Then, then he preached his own funeral sermon—"Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves." We ought not to weep for him now, but to rejoice and give thanks for him. The primitive Christians used to bury their holy ones with hymns and psalms of joy. Chrysostom †, in his fourth Homily on the Hebrews, saith: "We are to glorify God, and give thanks to him, that

Samuel Lawrence.' See M. Henry's Miscellaneous Works, edition 1811, p. 800.

* Their *sermon* books are here referred to. Mr. Henry was in the habit of writing the sermons he heard preached from an early period of his life, till within a few years of his death, when the use of spectacles rendered writing not so easy to him. It was a practice he much recommended to others. See his Life, chap. I. That great Lawyer and enlightened Christian, Sir Matthew Hale, exhorted his children to adopt this plan. See his Directions concerning the Sabbath.

† A very eloquent Father of the Church, born at Antioch, A. D. 347. He died at Comana, in Pontus, 407, æt. 60. See Cave, and Aikin's General Biog. vol. II. p. 686.

he hath crowned the deceased, and freed them from their labours." He chides those that mourned and howled (yet the good women stood weeping over Dorcas, and did well). The days of their death were called *Natalitia Martyrum et Sanctorum: The birth-days of the Saints and Martyrs.* And Hierom *, in his Epitaph on Paula †, and in the lives of other holy persons written by him, says: 'That at her funeral no shrieks were heard, but multitudes of psalms and hymns were sung in divers languages.' And so should we for our deceased, heavenly brother; that he turned to Christ; that he cleaved to Christ; that he suffered for Christ; that he lived to Christ; that he overcame the world through Christ; that he laboured more abundantly than us all; and that he is pardoned, accepted, and glorified, we trust, through the blood of Christ.—It was not Mr. Henry's righteousness that saved him, nor Mr.

* This eminent Father was born at Stridon, a city upon the confines of Dalmatia, in the ancient Pannonia. He instructed several Roman ladies in piety; Paula, among the rest; who became, under his discipline, rare examples of sanctity. He was the first that wrote against Pelagius. He died in 420, at about 78 or 80 years, or, according to Cave, 91. See the great Historical Dictionary, folio, 1694.

† The disciple of St. Jerom. She is very famous for piety and knowledge. In order the more easily to understand the holy Scriptures, she studied with great delight the Hebrew language, and, after exemplifying all Christian virtues, died Jan. 26, 404. See the great Hist. Dict. 1694.

Henry's strength that quickened and upheld him. No: it was the righteousness of *Christ*, and the strength of *Christ*. And it is *Christ* who, we trust, hath now gloriously crowned him: to Him be the praise. I the more willingly mention this, because when we speak of such good men, we find ourselves apt to ascribe all to *their* strength, and goodness, and righteousness. We are very apt to do this. But miserable had our holy friend been, had he done so; and far from being holy and happy now. In his discourses, and sermons, and letters, he ascribed *all* to the grace of Christ, and made him his All in All. Let us therefore glorify God in him.

3. Bewail your loss, yet so as to have hope in God.—Bewail the *general* loss, and *your own* loss in particular. He is a *general* loss many ways. How did he pray for the public! to instance in one particular. You know it well: how faithfully, how earnestly, how feelingly! And I have been told, that on the last Lord's day he gave notice three times, (once in the morning, and twice in the afternoon,) of the public fast that was to be kept, and was kept yesterday. Such a desire he had to keep it; and it was the first day that you fasted in that manner without his spiritual and enlivening help.

Bewail *your own* loss in particular. I need not tell you how great it is. You *feel* it more

than I am able to express it. But O what rejoicing is there in many, that he is gone!—that the Puritan, the Schismatic is gone:—but do you say, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall I shall arise, when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause." This, I hope, you may in some measure apply to yourselves: though your concerns are far below those of the Church mentioned there.

4. Seek out for a supply.

It is not enough to mourn and sit still, but you should be up and doing, in your places. Therefore seek for a supply by your prayers. Seek it by your inquiries; seek it by your interest; and by your purses. You have had a cheap Gospel hitherto. God sent you one that could preach freely; and, which is more, would do so too: he sought not yours, but you. He read in the Prophet Zechariah, "Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." Oh! say some, now they *will* be scattered, now that meeting will be broken up—there is an end of that. Therefore ye, my brethren, and all of us, pray that God will raise up others like him: like Taylor, Parsons, Steel, Lawrence, and Porter, &c. Pray that God will raise such out of all places: out of schools and universities; out of families, and out of

courts too, as this our brother was, and to give *you* one of them.

5. Take heed of liking no preacher, now he is gone.—This is a usual fault among many that have had excellent ones. I have seen it. I have heard of it. Nobody can please them. Take heed of this, my brethren, and I trust you will. You know, people may live and thrive by coarser fare; and oftentimes God blesses weaker means, and makes souls live and thrive under them.

6. May I add a sixth direction?—"Hold fast that which you have."

This counsel was given to the best of the churches of Philadelphia, and therefore may well be given to you. And the Apostle, writing to Timothy, saith: "That good thing which is committed unto thee, keep, by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." "By the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us,"—not by our own proud free-will and strength. "That good thing which is committed to us"—that savouriness of heart—that heavenly-mindedness—that love to Christ, and to the saints, to *all* saints, and to all men—that knowledge of the truth; and in particular, keep to his sober principles. Remember, I pray you, that remarkable speech to his dear son, a little before he departed. Exhorting him to go on and to do worthily in the ministry, he added, 'Follow peace and holiness, and let men say what they will.'

A worthy saying, and answerable to the course of his life. Let it be engraven on your hearts. Now he is gone, strive to have these things always in remembrance. Take heed of falling off. Take heed of falling away. The world will draw you, and Satan will tempt you, and your own base hearts will be apt to betray you; but go on humbly and honestly in the strength of Christ, and fear not. Be not like those Jews that turned aside when John Baptist was dead. "He was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." The Lord keep you from being such, and give you to go on to his heavenly kingdom*. Remember the three doctrines. Remember the example of this your holy and beloved Pastor. And remember those few exhortations I have left with you. And the God of mercy grant that you and I, and all of us, may get some spiritual advantage by this our meeting to-day; and be somewhat better by our mourning at the decease of our dear and honoured friend.

* The preceding exhortations were introduced, in an abridged form, into P. Henry's Life, chap. IX.

EIGHTEEN

SERMONS

BY THE

REV. PHILIP HENRY, M. A.

SERMON I.

PSALM xxiii. 1.

The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.

IN these words are held forth to us two things:—

I. A sweet relation between a true believer and his God:—"the Lord is my shepherd."

II. The comfortable improvement that faith makes of that relation:—it being so, "I shall not want."

From hence note this in general: Whatsoever relation a believer stands in to God, he may assure himself of all the good which that relation carries in it. Is he thy Father, and art thou his child? Be sure he will take a care for thee, and pity and spare thee. Is he thy Master, and art thou his servant? Be sure he will reward thee for all thy work and labour of love shewn to his name. Is he thy husband, and art thou married to him? Be sure he loves and delights in thee. Is he thy shepherd, and art thou one of his sheep? Be sure thou shalt not want. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

By adding one proposition to these two, there will be made an entire syllogism. Thus: Those whose shepherd the Lord is, shall not want: the Lord is my shepherd: therefore I shall not want.

I shall prove the major in the ensuing discourse by way of doctrine; and, in the application, direct how to make the assumption, and how to draw forth the conclusion for the comfort of believers.

DOCTRINE: Those whose shepherd the Lord is, shall not want.

"O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him." Psalm xxxiv. 9. 'Where is the godly man that can say, and say truly, he wants *nothing?*' "They that seek the Lord shall not want any *good* thing." Psalm xxxiv. 10. "No *good* thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psalm lxxxiv. 11. Nothing that is really, spiritually good. Many things seem to us to be good, that indeed are not so. This the Lord knows. Those who fear the Lord find their desires cooled and moderated: in this sense they thirst no more. "They shall not want."

1. They shall not want protection.—One main part of a shepherd's care is, that his sheep may be in safety. They are by nature very fearful creatures; have many enemies; and, withal, are

very weak. The people of God are in the world as a flock of sheep compassed about with dogs and wolves. But here is their privilege, the Lord hath undertaken their defence.

(1.) In regard of outward things; their persons, estates, relations, all their concerns.—" The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." The most provident shepherd that is, doth not know how many locks of wool are upon each of his sheep. Much may be torn from them by dogs, and much by briers and thorns in hedges, which they cannot help. But our Shepherd in heaven will secure us—even the very hairs upon our heads.—So for their estates. The devil said to God concerning Job, " Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" Round about—not on one side only. ' But a hedge may be torn up, or broken through.' " As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever." A wall of hills. ' But the highest mountains that are may be scaled; men may climb over them.' See, therefore, Zech. ii. 5: " I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of *fire* round about"—*that* men cannot get over. It is customary with shepherds to make fires about their folds in the night, that wild beasts may not

come at them. O how secure may the sheep of Christ be on this account! "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me. I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about." And here, in this Psalm: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." When one said to Luther*, at the beginning of the Reformation, 'Shortly the Emperor will invade Germany, and where will you be then?'

* Dr. Martin Luther, the celebrated Reformer, was born at Eisleben, in Saxony, Nov. 10, 1483, and died there, Feb. 18, 1546. "His life," says Atterbury, "was a continual warfare; he was engaged against the united forces of the Papal world; and he stood the shock of them bravely, both with courage and success. He was a man of high endowments of mind, and great virtues. He had a vast understanding, which raised him up to a pitch of learning unknown to the age in which he lived. His knowledge of Scripture was admirable, his elocution manly, and his way of reasoning with all the subtlety the plain truths he delivered would bear. His thoughts were bent always on great designs, and he had a resolution fitted to go through with them. The assurance of his mind was not to be shaken or surprised. His life was holy, and he had no ambition but in the service of God. He was of a temper particularly averse to covetousness, and charitable even to a fault." *Epistolary Correspondence*, vol. III. p. 449. Dr. Robertson has drawn Luther's character at length, and with his usual ability. See his Works, vol. VI. p. 310. See also his Life by Bower, a well-written and interesting work.

he answered: 'Either in heaven or under heaven; either in its possession, or under its protection: it is no matter which; both are safe and sweet.' Yet here we must take this along with us—if the sheep wander from their place, they are out of the Shepherd's care. While we are doing our duty, we shall be kept in all our ways. Psalm xci. 11. This the devil left out when he tempted our Lord Jesus to cast himself down. Matt. iv. 6.

(2.) Their souls are under his protection.—Though our outward man be exposed to great variety of dangers, yet not near to so many as our souls are. They are our better part, and therefore them the devil seeks most to injure. "The devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." But God is our Shepherd. When a temptation comes, we have the Name of the Lord as a strong tower to run into, and there we shall be safe. Prov. xviii. 10. St. Paul's counsel to Timothy was this: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

(3.) Their salvation is under his protection.—"I give unto them [Christ's sheep] eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Though the devil may prevail so far as to rob a believer of his peace here, yet do what he will to

him, he cannot rob him of his heaven hereafter. He is "kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation."

2. They shall not want provision.—Shepherds are very careful to provide good pasture for their sheep. He will provide for them. "Thou shalt dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Thou shalt have thy constant bread of allowance. He will rather make ravens feed thee, as they did Elijah, than see thee starve. If our hearts were settled in the belief of this, it would be a means of freeing us from much perplexing care. Luke xii. 29—32. Sheep, you know, will make shift to pick food where your other cattle, horses and kine and oxen, cannot. They can graze upon the tops of hills and barren mountains, or in fallow fields, and do well enough. The people of God, that know what it is to live by faith in the promise, can find that sweetness and contentment in a low, despised condition in the world, which others can never find in such a condition. Thus says St. Paul: "Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I am instructed both how to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." Thus the Prophet Habbakuk:

" Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

The provident shepherd sees need many times of removing his sheep from one field to another; but still they shall be where it is best for them. Our outward condition is liable to many changes. Sometimes sickness, sometimes health; one while friends, another while none; in good report, in evil report. But, still, here is the godly man's privilege; " All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

This for their outward man. Then for their souls, we may argue more strongly; surely *much more* will he provide for them. Not only for *necessity:* the flesh and blood of Christ, which is meat indeed, and drink indeed, John vi., without which they cannot live: They shall be fed with knowledge and understanding. Jer. iii. 15. But also for *delight:* they shall have the comforts of the Spirit: " He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

3. When there is occasion, they shall not want Physic.—Of all creatures, there are scarcely any so subject to distempers and diseases as sheep. This the provident shepherd knows, and is therefore careful in the use of means to prevent, as much as may be, disease; and what he doth not prevent, he endeavours to cure. When the people of God are under bodily weaknesses, as often they are, the most healthy souls dwelling for the most part in the most infirm bodies, the Lord hath promised to make all their bed in their sickness. Psalm xli. 3. Not to lay their pillow only, but their whole bed, as may be most easy for them. And then for inward distempers, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings. Mal. iv. 2. If they fall and wound themselves by sin, he will make the bones that are broken to rejoice. Psalm li. 8. If their graces languish and decay, he will strengthen the things that are ready to die. Rev. iii. 2. We have David's experience in the Psalm whence the text is taken: "He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his Name's sake." "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom; and shall gently lead those that are with young."

One great cause of diseases in sheep, is the keeping of them too long in over-rich pasture. The godly often surfeit upon outward enjoyments; and

then the Lord cures them, by letting blood in that vein; by taking that away from them which was the snare to their affections. As when the sheep wanders, sometimes the shepherd sends his dog to worry them home; so doth the Lord by seasonable afflictions. "Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then she shall say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now." Hos. ii. 6, 7. He hath given orders likewise to his under-shepherds, his ministers, to prevent the infection of the whole flock when any one of the sheep is sick. "Warn them that are unruly." 1 Thess. v. 14. "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." 1 Cor. v. Thus you see wherein God's care is manifested. See most of these together in one Scripture: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the

mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." Ezek. xxxiv. 11—17.

'But what are the grounds of all this care?' Partly the Shepherd. He is "the great Shepherd," Heb. xiii. 10: great in skill and power; and he is "the good Shepherd," John x. 11. And partly the sheep. They are his *own* proper sheep. Among men, the owner of the flock is seldom or never the shepherd of the flock. He hires others to look to them, as Laban did Jacob. But the Lord looks to his sheep himself, and therefore it is they are so well looked to. "He that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep." They are his pasture-sheep—others are the sheep of his *common*.

They are his *dearly-purchased* sheep. The more we pay for any thing, the more tender we are

of it. The Lord hath paid dear for his flock—the precious blood of his only Son. "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." See a strange expression, Deut. xxxii. 6: "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy *father*, that hath *bought* thee?"

Having thus far acquainted you with the privileges which belong to those whose shepherd the Lord is, I am next to acquaint you with the *duties* that are expected from them. You have heard what God will do for you; you are now to hear what you must do for God. In the general, you are to labour after all the commendable properties of sheep, that it may appear by your conversation that you belong to the flock of Jesus Christ. I shall mention five: and they are all such as are, more or less, to be found in every true believer, and may therefore serve as so many marks and trials by which we may judge of our condition.

1. Sheep are harmless creatures.—Other creatures are often doing mischief: some with their horns, others with their hoofs, others with their teeth. The sheep do hurt to none. The Lord's people should be an innocent, harmless people. "Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Matt. x. 16. "Be blameless and harmless."

Phil. ii. 15. We must endeavour to walk inoffensively towards all, so as knowingly to wrong none, either by tongue or hand, word or deed. Beware of jeering, reviling, reproaching, and do not countenance those who do so.

2. Sheep are patient creatures.—Though they do no injuries to others, yet they are very patient when they receive injuries from others. Upon this account, a comparison is made between the sheep and our Lord Jesus: "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Of this temper should all the Lord's people be. If God afflict us, either immediately, by himself, or use men as instruments, we should kiss the rod. "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another: love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but, contrariwise, blessing." If a dog bark at a sheep, a sheep will not bark at a dog. *Dod's* Sayings.*

* The Rev. John Dod, the celebrated author of the 'Sayings,' was born at Shotlidge, near Malpas, in Cheshire; and died at Fausley, Northamptonshire, in 1645, aged 96. He was an excellent Hebrician, a powerful preacher, and an eminent Christian. See Clark's Lives. Middleton's Biog. Evang. vol. III. p. 171.

3. Sheep are profitable creatures. — Almost every thing in a sheep is profitable. They are profitable while they live—great increase of wool and lambs. They are very profitable when they die—their skin and their flesh. The Lord's people should be a profitable people. "Fruitful in good works." Col. i. 10. "Charge them that they be *rich* in good works." 1 Tim. vi. 18. They should be always doing good to the souls of men, by reproving, admonishing, instructing; and to the bodies of men, by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked. Alas! Now-a-days, it is become almost a piece of Popery to exhort men to good works. We should so live, as that, when we die, there may be a miss of us. Wicked men are called in Scripture, children of *Belial*, that is, *unprofitable* children.

4. Sheep are tractable creatures.—There doth not need that violence in dealing with them as with other creatures. The very voice or whistle of the shepherd rules them. They hear and follow *.

* It was a common thing in the *East* for the shepherds to walk *before* their flocks, and the sheep to follow, and not be driven, as ours are. The shepherd went before them, calling them, and sometimes singing, but oftener playing upon a pipe, or other musical instrument. That celebrated philosopher, Mr. John Ray, tells us, in his Travels, he saw several instances of the kind. This may illustrate John x. 3, 4, 5.

Such should be the disposition of the sheep of Christ. "The sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." John x. 3, 4, 5. They should be *ready* to good works.

5. Sheep are sociable creatures.—They delight to be together in flocks; and it is safest for them. It is said, that, if it thunder while a sheep with young is wandering *alone* from the flock, very fear will make her cast her young, which would not be the case were she with the flock. Many a child of God hath been exceedingly wronged by being caught alone. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" Τίνα—in the singular number. The devil hath great advantage over us when he can take us single; and therefore the people of God have great reason to prize fellowship with one another. "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? If thou know not, O thou fairest

among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents." Wicked men have their fellowships, which they delight in, and they call it good fellowship, but it is stark naught.

To conclude. All the men in the world may be divided into three ranks: — *Sheep:* those are true believers;—*Goats:* those are the openly profane;—*Wolves in sheep's clothing:* those are the close hypocrites. They are said to be the wolves, not goats, because there are no such enemies to sheep. Those do most hate the power of godliness, that have most of the form of godliness. It will concern us to inquire of which sort we are. Only true sheep shall be set at Christ's right hand: the rest shall be at his left. "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set his sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."

Make it sure to yourselves that God is your shepherd. Are you his sheep? Have you chosen him? Sensible of your strayings, say, Lord, take the charge of me. "I have gone astray, like a lost sheep: seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments." Psalm cxix. 176. "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of

Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one Head, and they shall come up out of the land." Hosea i. 11. They shall *appoint*—that is, consent to God's appointing.

Have you in any measure the properties of sheep? Are you harmless, patient, profitable, tractable, and sociable? Make use of your relation: "The Lord is *my* shepherd; I shall not want."

SERMON II.

GENESIS XXXIX. 9.

How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

THIS chapter is concerning Joseph, who is here represented to us in the very mouth of a temptation, and yet wonderfully preserved and delivered from it. I say *wonderfully*. It was no less a wonder, all things considered, for Joseph to be tempted and not to yield, than it was for the three children to be in the fiery furnace and not be burned. But the Lord, that was with them in the fire, was with him also in Potiphar's house, and so he escaped.

We may consider the *temptation* itself.—It was to the sin of uncleanness: that sin, which, of all others, we may suppose most suited to Joseph's present age and condition. To his age, as he was young, in the heat and prime of his youth: to his condition, as he was single and unmarried. This was the temptation. The devil studies and knows mankind. In fishing for precious souls he

can tell what bait is most likely to take, and that he makes use of. Wherefore it concerns us to take heed to ourselves, and to watch in an especial manner against those sins which we find most easy to our nature, that Satan may not get advantage against us, for " we are not ignorant of his devices."

We may consider the *tempter*.—It was his master's wife (verse 7.) Had it been another, it had not been so much. This added greatly to his danger, if we look upon him in his present relation, as a servant. Thus he might have reasoned with himself: ' If I yield to my mistress in her desire, besides the sensual gratification, I shall gain a friend in her. I am in Egypt a stranger; sold hither; and such a friend is worth having. On the other side, if I yield not, I must never look for a quiet hour: she will tell tales of me to my master, and I shall be turned out of doors.'—What a temptation was here! The devil does not only study what temptation to send, but by whom to send. He tempts by such as have most power over us and interest in us. He tempted Adam by Eve; Job by his wife; our Lord Jesus by Peter. Therefore in this also we must take heed.

We may consider his *escape*.—" He refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand: there

is none greater in his house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Two things struck upon him why he should not yield—ingratitude against his master, and sin against God. "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

DOCTRINE I. Where there is truth of grace, there is unwillingness to sin against God.

So it was with Joseph here. He was a renewed, sanctified person; one that had the truth of grace: and he, when a temptation offered, a very plausible, fair temptation, yet had that within him that turned another way with dislike and disdain. "How *can* I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

There are two special acts of the will—to choose, and to refuse. As it is with our hands, there are two uses of them: the one, to take things; the other, to put things away. In like manner it is with the will. The corruption of it stands in this,—in our taking the evil, and putting away the good; in choosing sin, and refusing Christ. This is the case of every man till he is effectually called and sanctified, 'Let me have

sin,' is his language, 'let who will have Christ let my lust be satisfied; it is no matter what the command of God is. Give me Barabbas.' As the imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil, and that continually; so the bent and inclination of the will is only toward evil, and that continually.

But now when the Spirit of grace is given, and the good work is begun, it is no longer so. There is a great and wonderful change wrought: the stream is turned the contrary way: that which was *towards* sin before, is now *against* sin. You would think it strange if the brook that runs by the town should quite alter its course, and from henceforward run the other way. Why, a stranger thing than that is brought to pass, when a poor soul, formerly addicted to vanity and wickedness, is quite taken off, and now hates and abhors it. This is conversion. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xviii. 3. 'What is it to be converted?' To be converted, is to be turned, changed. Not only in the outward conversation—that is not enough to evidence a man's conversion—but in the inward bent and inclination of the heart. The *will* is converted. Is thy will converted from sin? Here lies the main of the work. They that shall be saved are

such whose will is converted from sin. This I mean by the doctrine, Where there is truth of grace, there is unwillingness to sin against God.

I. I shall speak something by way of caution and explication, for the right understanding of this doctrine, in four particulars.

1. Notwithstanding the will of a child of God is converted from sin, yet he may and doth sin.

No mere man, since the Fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed. "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." This Paul acknowledges concerning himself: "The evil which I would not, that I do." It was through grace that his will was against sin: it was through corruption, that, notwithstanding that, yet he did sin. This our Lord Jesus pleads for his disciples: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Though they slept, yet it was against their bent and inclination.

2. Though he cannot properly be said to sin wilfully, yet he may and doth sin willingly, notwithstanding the work of sanctification upon his will.

There is a great difference between sinning

wilfully and sinning willingly. That sin is committed wilfully which is committed with the free and full consent of the will—deliberately, knowingly, purposely. This is a main ingredient in the sin against the Holy Ghost, according as some understand that of the Apostle: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Though I rather take the meaning to be, If ye will yet continue the ceremonies and sacrifices of the law, after the publishing and entertaining of this truth of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, you must never look for another to die and suffer, but must necessarily perish in your unbelief.

That sin is committed *willingly* which hath consent; but it is only a weak, imperfect, half-consent, as it were, with a kind of unwilling willingness. Temptation prevails; the new creature is overpowered; lust is too hard for him. As a mariner in a storm casts his goods into the sea to lighten the ship. He doth it willingly, but he doth it not wilfully. Or as a traveller upon the road, when assaulted by a thief: he gives him his purse, but it is with a kind of unwilling willingness: he is not able to make opposition. So a child of God. Temptation sets upon him as he is going on in his way to heaven; and sometimes he is aware of it, and fights as long as he can; and

after all, it may be, foiled at last. At other times again it surprises him, as David surprised Saul when he took away the spear and the cruse: 1 Sam. xxvi. But yet, for all this, the drift and bent of his soul is against sin; and the foil he receives now makes him fight with the more courage the next time.

With him that is not renewed, it is not so. It is said of Ahab, he sold himself to work wickedness, 1 Kings xxi. 25. Paul was *sold:* "I am carnal, sold under sin," Rom. vii. 14. But Ahab sold *himself;* it was his own voluntary act.

3. This unwillingness to sin hath not the same growth and strength in all the Lord's people.

Some are weak in the faith, and they resist weakly; yet they *do* resist. Others are strong men, experienced soldiers in this warfare. It is with this as with every other grace—there are degrees.

4. The same believer is not always in the same frame in this respect.

There is a twofold unwillingness. 1. Habitual. This is always in him, whether he sleep or awake, or whatever he doth: he hath that in his will which is contrary to sin.—2. Actual. This may be interrupted. Though it may be in him to oppose sin, yet at present little of that opposition may

appear. The ground hereof may be sometimes in the Temptation; according as it is more or less suitable, or more or less violent. Sometimes it may be in Himself; according as the temper of his spirit is. Now,

1. After the enjoyment of God in an ordinance, a Christian's unwillingness to sin is heightened exceedingly. As after eating honey the mouth is out of taste to other things; and as looking much upon the sun dazzles the eye to all sublunary objects for a time: so when the believer has feasted on heavenly dainties, when he has had a view by faith of the Sun of Righteousness, he has a distaste for earthly things, especially for those which are sinful and vile. How well Peter was resolved after the sacrament! — though it is true, indeed, before morning the impression was worn away:—" Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Matt. xxvi. 33.

2. While under the hand of God in an affliction, this unwillingness to sin is in general greatly increased. Where there is no grace, in a time of affliction men will be more unwilling to sin than at another time—even the worst of men. Come to them when they are sick, or in pain, and tempt them, though it be to a sin wherein formerly they have been delighted, and they will scarce have patience to hear you. " When he slew them,

then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer." Psalm lxxviii. 34, 35. In like manner is it with God's people. As a child, while the rod is over him, is peculiarly careful not to offend; so it is with them. Not that this is *all* the cause of their unwillingness to sin, but it proves by accident an occasion to increase it, embittering sin to them the more.

II. I shall prove the truth of the doctrine, that where there is truth of grace there is unwillingness to sin against God.

It appears, 1. From the prayers of God's people.

Prayer is the pulse of the soul. As prayer beats, so we may judge the soul to be sick or well. One "said to Peter, Surely thou art also one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee." Matt. xxvi. 73. So it may be said of Christians, their prayer bewrayeth them.

There are two things ordinarily in the prayers of God's people, which discover their wills are against sin. The one is—those petitions which they put up for strength against sin. When a town expects a siege, and sends up and down beforehand to their neighbours for provision, corn,

ammunition, &c. it is a sign they intend to stand it out. So the Christian seeks Divine help for the combat. David prays for himself, "Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us." Psalm lxviii. 28. "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me." Psalm cxix. 133. Thus Paul prayed for the Ephesians: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."

The other is—those petitions which they put up for deliverance from sin: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii. 24. What is the meaning of those many hearty sighs and groans after the appearance of Jesus Christ, whom they love and long for, unless it be this,—they are weary of sin; loath to continue longer grieving the good Spirit of grace? "O make haste, my beloved."

2. From their practices it is also apparent.

They are such as practise a continual war with sin; and thence it appears they are unwilling to sin. While a man struggles, and strives, and fights with an enemy, it is a sign how loth he is to come under his power. As before conversion there was struggling, and striving, and fighting against Christ,

which did evidence the enmity of our hearts against him, and made it manifest we were not willing that he should reign over us (see Ps. ii. 1, 2;) so after conversion, when the soul struggles, and strives, and fights with sin, it is clear we account it as an enemy, and are unwilling to be servants and slaves to it any longer.

Now it is thus with *all* the people of God; yea, indeed, and with them only.—It is so with them all. Every gracious heart is a scene of struggling—of struggling between grace and corruption, between the new man and the old. And, indeed, it cannot but be so, if we consider their contrariety to each other. They cannot choose but fight. It is as impossible to reconcile grace and corruption, as to reconcile fire and water. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," Gal. v. 17. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," Gen. iii. 15. The seed of the woman—that is, grace—and the seed of the serpent—that is, sin—can never be made to agree, for God hath put enmity between them. See Luke xi. 21, 22. I might here appeal to the experience of all that fear God, whether they have not found it so. Paul testified it concerning himself, once and again, Rom. vii. And therefore,

by the way, be not discouraged, so as to think thy condition the worse for those conflicts which thou findest in thyself against sin: there is nothing befallen thee but what is common to all believers: rather rejoice. Many are troubled, as Rebecca; "if it be so, why am I thus?" Go on fighting; thou shalt overcome at last.

It is thus with the people of God *only*.—It is the *privilege* of believers, such as are made partakers of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Others are strangers to this combat. Wicked men know not what it means. In the state of innocency, Adam was not molested with it, because he had no sin: in the state of unregeneracy, unsanctified persons are not blessed with it, because they have no grace.

It may be objected, 'Have not wicked men oftentimes conflicts within themselves, when a temptation is before them, whether they shall yield to it or no? Not only checks after, but strivings before?' Yes, doubtless they have. See an instance in Balaam, Numb. xxii. 18: "And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." What could Joseph, or David, or Paul himself, have said more? How unwilling was Pilate to pass the sentence upon Christ! See John xviii. 29—38; xix. 4. And yet there is

a vast difference, in divers respects, between the conflicts that are in a regenerate man against sin, and those that are in another. I shall mention some few.

(1.) They differ in the parties that fight.—In the godly man the conflict is between the Spirit and the flesh. In the other it is not so: only flesh fights against flesh; there is no grace to make opposition. One faculty fights against another. Conscience, somewhat awakened, dictates thus and thus; 'You ought not to follow these courses: it is not well done of you to neglect prayer, profane the Sabbath, abuse the good creatures of God, lavish away your time, your estate, your health.' The will is full of stubbornness, and replies; 'I care not; I will do it. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.' Here the conflict is not between grace and corruption, but between the will and the conscience. Set meat before a hungry animal, and let one stand by with a cudgel: the appetite is wholly for the meat, but the animal is afraid of being beaten, and so does not eat. So it is with the unregenerate man, when tempted to sin: his will is, wholly to sin, but conscience frightens him. Whereas the regenerate man is exactly the opposite. Set meat before a sick man: his will, led by his *senses*, moves him to eat; but led by *reason*, he forbears—it will hurt him.

(2.) They differ in the matter of the quarrel, or

the thing which they fight about.—In a carnal, unregenerate man, the combat is mostly, if not always, about some public, gross sin: whether he shall yield to forswear himself for advantage, commit murder, or the like. But in a believer, the quarrel being taken up against sin *as sin*, therefore he fights with *every* sin. With *spiritual* sins: unbelief, pride, hardness of heart, vain thoughts. "Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart," 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. "I hate vain thoughts," Ps. cxix. 113. With *secret* sin: such as the world sees not: so Joseph here. With *lesser*, smaller sins: such as the world sees, but makes no account of: idle, vain, unprofitable discourse, petty oaths. These a gracious heart fights against.

(3.) They differ in the motives that move them to fight.—A carnal, unregenerate man may oppose sin; but it is either out of slavish fear, out of love to himself, out of care for his credit, or because, else, conscience will not let him alone, or the like. Here is no love to God, no eye to Christ, nothing of the new nature. And yet it were well if there were more of this in the world. Did men apprehend and believe the ill consequences of sin, what will come of it in the end, there would be no small reformation among us. But, "Lord, who hath believed our report?"—Oh let us learn to look beyond sin!

Where grace is, the ground of opposition is

hatred of sin as a dishonour to God. So Joseph: 'how shall I!'—it is a grief to my spirit; a wound, a stain to my own soul. 'Shall *I* do this?' I, who am under so many engagements; I, who have received so many mercies?—'how shall *I* do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

(4.) They differ in the event and issue of the quarrel.—Notwithstanding all the conflicts that arise in the heart of an unregenerate man about sin, yet he still lives in the ordinary practice of it. Balaam had a combat within himself, whether he should curse Israel or not; and yet had done it, if God had not over-ruled him. Pilate was loth to condemn Christ, yet he did it. See the case of Saul, 1 Sam. xiii. 12.: "Therefore, said I, the Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself, therefore, and offered a burnt-offering."

It may be asked: 'When there is actual resistance made against a sin, and yet, after all, we commit it, does this lessen the sin, or make it greater?' In a word, without question it makes it exceedingly greater. There is much presumption in such a sin; and presumptuous sins are great sins. Many deal with sin as Samson dealt with Delilah. How often did he leave her, as if he were angry with her, and return again, and they were as good friends as ever, till she proved

his undoing! Just so it is with a sinner and his sins, in numberless instances. Whereas, though sometimes a child of God may be worsted, and temptation may be too hard for him, yet for the most part he comes off a conqueror; as Joseph here: "He refused."

(5.) There is this difference likewise: An unregenerate man hath some conflicts within himself concerning sin; but they are a burden to him: he had rather a great deal be without them than be thus troubled. With the godly man it is not so. He rejoices in it as a mercy, and can bless God from his very soul that there is such a principle within him to fight against sin.

Use 1. This informs us what kind of life the life of a Christian is—a warfare, a continual warfare, against many and mighty enemies, and those, too, in our own bosom.

2. For trial.—Let me ask you, what experience have you had of these conflicts? Is all at peace within? 'No: I have many strivings!' But examine who are the parties—examine into the matter of the quarrel—into the motives that actuate to the fight—observe the event—and search whether you are thankful, or otherwise.

3. For exhortation.—"Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." We have a good cause: for the life of our souls we struggle. We have

good seconds—God, and Christ, and angels. We shall have good pay: see Rev. ii. and iii.: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

I proceed now to observe, that from the opposition, or no opposition, that is made by the will against sin, a sin comes to be either a wilful sin or a sin of infirmity.

When *no* opposition is made, but the will is wholly upon it, it is a wilful sin. When there *is* opposition made, the will is against it, only for want of strength grace is overpowered, it is to be reckoned an infirmity. This in general: but more particularly to shew you when a sin is to be accounted an infirmity, I premise:

1. In some sense, all sins, by whomsoever and howsoever committed, are infirmities; that is, sicknesses and diseases upon the soul. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Psalm ciii. 3. "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Isaiah xxxiii. 24.

As diseases disfigure, weaken, and, if not cured, destroy the body, so does sin the soul. If the soul were in perfect health, as Adam's was in innocency, and as the glorified saints' are in heaven,

there would be no sin: and if it had not been for sin, Adam had still been in that state of health. Sickness and death, both of body and soul, came into the world with sin.

2. A sin of infirmity cannot be so well judged of by one particular act, as by the whole stream and course of a man's conversation. The same sin, though often committed by one, may yet still be reckoned his infirmity; whereas another may but once commit it, and yet in him it may be a wilful sin.

3. No gross, scandalous sin is to be reckoned a sin of infirmity, strictly and properly. If Joseph had yielded, after all, to this temptation, though at first he refused and opposed it, it had not been an infirmity in him, because adultery is a great wickedness. That is no sin of infirmity which is a great wickedness. Therefore they are mistaken that comfort themselves with this,—though they are common drunkards and swearers, yet God passeth it by, because it is their infirmity. If a man be sick of the plague, you will not call it his infirmity. These sins are plagues upon the soul.

4. No presumptuous sin is to be accounted a sin of infirmity. These two are contra-distinct to each other. A presumptuous sin, properly, is that sin which a man commits hoping to escape unpunished. He knows what his sin deserves—the wrath and curse of God. If he be a child of God,

he knows it will break his peace, and wound his conscience, and expose him, however, to temporal chastisements, though from eternal torments he may be freed; and yet, notwithstanding, he ventures: the present profit or pleasure of the sin inveigles him: yea, although thoughts of what may come of it be at that very instant cast into his mind, yet he doth it. This is no infirmity: it is a presumptuous sin; a sin with a high hand. "The soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him." Numb. xv. 30, 31. He sins presumptuously that sins because he will sin. Many think it a brave spirit to say, I will do it: I will, and I care not. See 1 Sam. viii. 19; Exod. xv. 19; Isa. xiv. 13, 14. Were there no will, said Bernard*, there would be no hell. God will be as wilful as you: "With the

* St. Bernard, one of the Fathers of the Church, and Abbot of Clairvaux, was born near Dijon, in Burgundy, 1091. He was of great celebrity. "His mind was cast in a peculiar mould. Sequestered habits, ascetic practices, devotional ardour, and the contemplation of celestial objects, could alone occupy his thoughts." He died A. D. 1153.—See Berington's Literary History of the Middle Ages, p. 278.

froward thou wilt shew thyself froward." Ps. xviii. 26.

5. No reigning sin is to be accounted a sin of infirmity. The Apostle counsels us, "Let not sin *reign* in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

There is a two-fold reign of sin.—In some, sin reigns as a *king*, with free consent and full subjection of the soul. So in wicked men; they make provision for the flesh.—In others, sin reigns as a *tyrant:* power it hath, but it is a usurped power. As when a people live under a government towards which they are disaffected, they could wish with all their hearts they were from under the yoke, and are therefore ready upon the least occasion to make insurrections; but their king is too hard for them. Thus it is with a child of God. He is weary of his corruptions; they are his burden, which he would fain be rid of, but cannot get free: he struggles, and strives, and fights. Sin will not let him be at peace, nor will he let sin be at peace: his *will* is toward God.

It may be inquired, 'What are the signs of a *reigning* sin?'

1. That is a reigning sin which all our other sins are made to serve. When sin is gotten upon the throne it will not only exercise a commanding power over the man, soul and body, (Rom. vi. 13,)

but over all its fellows too. No lust shall be further owned and countenanced than it pays tribute to that.

The great reigning sin among the Pharisees was revenge. They knew not what to do to be revenged upon Christ, and therefore it took up their thoughts. They met often in consultation. It commanded their purse: they bargained with Judas for thirty pieces of silver to betray him. For the sake of this they nourished their hypocrisy. If a man's reigning sin be love of the world, swearing, lying, cheating, sabbath-breaking—all are for the sake of it, which ever it be. Though it is true there may be many reigning sins in one heart, yet commonly all are subordinate to one. It is the sinner's misery to serve many masters. See Titus iii. 3.

2. That sin which doth most frequently tempt, and tempting does most easily take, is a reigning sin. Some sins the devil is obliged to cook with a great deal of art to please the sinner; but a reigning sin needs it not: it carries its own bait with it: it finds the soul like tinder, ready to catch at every spark. The sin that reigned in Balaam was desire of promotion. See Numb. xxii. 17—19. The sin that reigned in Judas was covetousness.

3. When a sin hath engaged a man in inconveniences, and yet notwithstanding is courteously entertained, it is a reigning sin. Love to Delilah

reigned in Sampson, and therefore, though she had betrayed him three times, yet he could not choose but tell her at last where his strength lay. Judges xvi. 6, &c. Though the ass spoke to Balaam, though the angel met him, yet he goes on. When a man hath smarted for his drunkenness, and brought a disease upon him, and yet continues the sinful practice, that is his reigning sin. "They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." Prov. xxiii. 35.

Use.—Exhortation: Let not sin reign in thy soul. It must needs have a place there while thou art in the world, but let it not have a *throne* there.

Consider 1. What a dishonour it is to a man to serve sin. The baser and more ignoble he is whom we serve, the baser and more ignoble is the service. It was Ham's curse to be a servant of servants. Now what is so base as a base lust, be it what it will—uncleanness, drunkenness;—to be at the beck and command of it—where that says Go, we go; Come, we come. It is below a man.

2. In serving sin thou servest the devil too. Where sin hath dominion the devil hath dominion. Eph. ii. 2. O how should this affect us! Shall I engage myself in the devil's service! To have the

body possessed by legions of unclean spirits was sad, but much more sad is it to have the *soul* possessed by sin.

3. Consider what wages will sin and Satan give their servants. If a service be hard and tedious, yet if the pay be good it is some encouragement. Thus Jacob served for Rachel. But know, sinner, "the wages of sin is death." O how canst thou choose but fly from such a master as will give thee no other reward in the end but everlasting chains of darkness!

4. Consider, in serving sin thou refusest all that liberty, and sweetness, and peace which are to be had in serving the living God. Two masters thou canst not serve: if thou cleave to the one, thou must renounce the other; and in so doing you forsake your own mercies. O therefore call to Him who hath an ear open for the oppressed!

A word to those that are made free by Christ. *Rejoice* in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. Bless God. It was a happy day of jubilee. *Stand fast* in it. Gal. v. 1.

I shall now give some positive marks of a sin of infirmity.

1. That is a sin of infirmity which is against the constant stream of a man's resolutions, prayers, and endeavours. — Against his *resolutions:* not

purposes only. 'Tis one thing to purpose; it is another thing to resolve. A purpose is a weak resolution: a resolution is a firm purpose. Now when the heart is bent and resolved against a sin, and that not by fits only, and in some good mood, but constantly and habitually, and yet notwithstanding the sin be committed, it is a sin of infirmity.

Against his *prayers*. When a man calls in for help from heaven, and in every prayer still this is one request,—Lord, pull down my pride, or subdue my passion: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" when, if Christ should come in person and say, what shall I do for you? Lord, that this lust may be mortified. In such case, when sin is committed, it must be a sin of infirmity.

No doubt, a man that hath no grace may have some kind of desires that he could leave his sin, but they come to nothing: faint, feigned desires. Cold wishings are desires in his heart, but they are not the desires of his heart. As Austin, he is afraid lest his prayer should be heard—not yet, Lord, not yet.

Against his *endeavours*. Resolutions and prayers not seconded with endeavours, signify nothing; but when, besides these, a man sets himself in the use of means to get his lust under—as fasting, watchfulness—yet, after all, he fall into the

sin, it is a sin of infirmity. Endeavourless prayers are like to be as unsuccessful as prayerless endeavours. It was folly in him, who, when he had said his prayers in the morning, would then conclude himself safe—now, Satan, do thy worst. But when both go together—Moses in the mount praying, and Joshua in the field fighting—and yet Amalek prevails, and yet nevertheless the sin be committed, it must be a sin of infirmity.

2. That is a sin of infirmity, which, after it is committed, is a man's constant grief, and shame, and burden.

His grief.—When a man reflects upon what he hath done, and hath no remorse in his conscience, no sense of the dishonour done to God; that was no weakness. But when his heart melts at the thought of it—as Peter, when Jesus looked back upon him—it is a sign such was a sin of infirmity.

His shame.—There is a two-fold shame. There is the shame of a thief when taken. Such may be where there is no grace. Jer. ii. 26. There is the shame which seizes upon a man that is fallen in the dirt: he is ashamed to come where cleanly people are till he hath washed himself. So it is with a child of God. It is one thing to be made ashamed: it is another thing to take shame.

His burden.—An infirmity is such a sin as keeps a man low and humble, and that constantly.

And this is one end why the Lord hath left these Canaanites to be thorns in our eyes, and goads in our sides, to abase and humble us: we should else be puffed up. And when it hath this effect, a blessed end is answered. As in bodily infirmities: suppose stammering, the party is not so forward to speak as others: so the Christian is kept diffident and humble by his infirmities.

3. Infirmities are such sins as are incident to all the saints. Some such there are, as vain thoughts, distractions in duty; there is not a child of God in the world that is wholly free from them. Now supposing them, as before stated, against the stream and current of thy daily serious resolutions, prayers, and endeavours, and matter of grief, shame, and burden to thee—be not discouraged. But if otherwise, they will prove wilful sins.

4. Infirmities are such sins as a man cannot avoid. Those first risings of corruption in the heart, antecedent to all approbation from the judgment or consent from the will; those inordinate motions, a thousand thousands of which pass us in a day—like the cup in Benjamin's sack, which he knew not of—are forbidden in the Tenth Commandment. These are put by God upon the score of our infirmities, supposing them against the stream and current of our resolutions, prayers, and endeavours, and our grief, shame, and burden. For pardon of these David prays: "Cleanse

thou me from secret faults," Psalm xix. 12. See Paul's complaint, Rom. vii. 21—23.

5. He that sins through infirmity, will not only bear with a reproof, but will love the reprover. It is a good sign the stream and bent of a man's heart is against sin, when he can heartily say, "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." Ps. cxli. 5. Suppose two men wounded: the one by thieves; the other, as is said some beggars will do to move pity, by their own hands. Offer salves and plaisters to them: the former will count it a kindness; the latter had as soon be without them. Here is the reason: the wounds of the former are their infirmities; those of the latter their choice. So here: if sin be thy choice, it is not thy infirmity; but otherwise, if not thy choice.

6. Where a man's sin is his infirmity, he is full of fears lest it be worse. 'Oh,' saith the poor soul, 'if I were but sure my sins were my infirmities, I could believe the pardon of them, and could lift up my head, and walk cheerfully, notwithstanding them; but I am afraid they are presumptuous, wilful sins; and for such there is no sacrifice!' Know for thy comfort, this day, this very fear of thine is a good evidence they are but thy infirmities. 'Oh, but I often fall into them.' Though thou dost, yet, notwithstanding, they may be but thy infir-

mities. It is true, indeed, relapses are dangerous to the soul, and a great grief and provocation to God. When a man is no sooner up, but down again, it is, in some sense, to repent of repentance; and yet such, especially where the sin is not gross and scandalous, may consist with truth of grace. The disciples, after warning, slept once and again. It was their infirmity; and Christ pitied them for it: see Matt. xxvi. This is a truth—abuse it not, at your peril!

Whereas, on the contrary, when men will cloke and excuse even great wickedness with this; 'I cannot help it, it is my infirmity: I swear and drink, to be sure!'—these are not infirmities. —'Why,' such will say, 'they *are* my infirmities; for I find I strive against them.' There may be strivings in the commission of even a wilful sin. Pilate strove; and yet will you say it was his infirmity that he condemned Christ? It rather greatens the sin.—'But surely it is my infirmity, for I am sorry for it afterwards.' So was Esau, when he had sold his birthright; so was Judas, when he had sold Christ.

Every qualm of conscience for sin is not godly sorrow for sin. Look, therefore, what is the constant frame of the soul. A man may have a variety of clothes, some worse, some better; and yet every day he wears those which he cares not who sees him in. So it is with a Christian:

though his heart may be in a better frame at some times than at others, yet he is always right in this, he hath an inward hatred against sin. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The evil which he doth he would not do.

Use. Comfort to God's people in reference to their infirmities.—Though there be much evil in them, Jesus Christ will not cast thee off because of them. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Psalm ciii. 13. What father is so unnatural as to cast off his child because of some infirmity? When he sends him on an errand: being weak, he stumbles and falls, and gets up again, and goes on about his business. Will he not pity? It is Luther's comparison: suppose a man have a wart on his hand, will he therefore cut off his hand? Believers are members in the body of Christ, and their infirmities are their warts. Abraham, Isaac, David, all had their warts; and yet they were not cast off—they were accepted. "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb. iv. 15. Then,

1. If Jesus Christ bears with us under our in-

firmities, so should we likewise with our brethren. Rom. xv. 1; Gal. vi. 1, 2.

2. Learn to bear with infirmities in *the things of Christ*, seeing he bears with us. As in the administration of ordinances—suppose preaching the word—let the sermon be never so good, if the preacher have any infirmity in his speech, or otherwise, it is not regarded. O consider: doth Christ receive duties from me, though compassed with infirmities, and shall I refuse a message from him, because it be not delivered exactly as I like? He eats the honey-comb with the honey (Sol. Song v. 1), and shall we be nice and dainty? *

3. So likewise in reference to afflictions; how contented and patient should it make us! God

* As Mr. Henry was an admirer of Mr. George Herbert's Poems, and sometimes quoted them in his Sermons, the following lines of his may have their use. From the "*Church Porch.*"

"Judge not the preacher; for he is thy judge.
If thou mislike him, thou conceiv'st him not.
God calleth preaching, folly. Do not grudge
To pick out treasure from an earthen pot.
The worst speak something good. If *all* want sense,
God takes the text, and preacheth patience.

"He that gets patience, and the blessing which
Preachers conclude with, hath not lost his pains.
He that, by being at church, escapes the ditch
Which he might fall in by companions, gains.
He that loves God's abode, and to combine
With saints on earth, shall one day with them shine.

bears with much in our services, and can we bear with nothing in his—not so much as a threat or a jeer? "Despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

"Jest not at preachers' language or expression.
How know'st thou, but *thy* sins made him miscarry?
Then turn thy faults and his into compassion.
God sent him, whatsoe'er he be. Oh tarry,
And love him for his Master. His condition,
Though it be ill, makes him no ill physician."

See the note at the end of Sermon XVI.

SERMON III.

REV. iii. 14—18.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

THIS epistle concerns the whole church, but is sent to the minister—to the angel.

DOCTRINE I. If any thing be amiss in the churches, Jesus Christ will require it at the ministers' hands.

You may think, it may be, Let us look to ourselves, and let them look to themselves; but you

are mistaken: we must give an account. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief."

Of all kinds of murder, soul murder is the worst. It is better twenty bodies were murdered, than one soul. Now see the love of Christ for souls—his care for souls: "Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write," &c.

DOCTRINE II. It is a great mercy that Jesus Christ will write his mind to his church.

He doth not only tell them what was amiss, though that were much, and more than we will do many times: if an injury be done to us, we smother it, and lay it up; whereas we ought to go and tell the offender of his fault: Matt. xviii. 15. But he hath *written* to us. Our condition, in this respect, is better than that of our fathers before the flood: and long after too. They had it by tradition, from hand to hand: we have it a surer way; not so liable to mistake and corruption: "We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts."

We have it, too, a readier way. Our Saviour

replied to satan's temptations, "It is written." The word is ever near us. Should we hear of such a book in France, written by the great God, O how we should desire to see it! Say not, "Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? The word is very nigh unto thee: in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

There is a generation that undervalue the written word; but I doubt not, God will make it honourable when they lie in the dust. Luther wished his books burnt, lest they should hinder the reading of the Scriptures.

We should look upon the Scriptures as written to us—thee and me. If one be asleep, a great noise will not awake him so soon as calling him by his name. Count not the written word a strange thing. Hosea viii. 12. It is a great *privilege* to have it. Rom. iii. 2. It is written to the Church, the court of rolls. Get a transcript of the word into thy heart. Prize the written word. One gave a cart-load of hay for a leaf of the Bible in English.

"*These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.*"

Our Lord is here styled the "Amen."—Amen

is a Hebrew word, used in Scripture two ways: nominally, as here and 2 Cor. i. 20: adverbially, by way of assent, "so be it;" and by way of asseveration, as much as "truly." It is, say some, the only word that escaped the confusion at Babel; it being the same in all languages.

'How is Jesus Christ the Amen?'—The word Amen is derived from a verb that signifies to establish; also, to be true. Jesus Christ is the "Truth," John xiv. 6. He is truth, as opposed to shadows. At him the ceremonial law pointed. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Christ is "the faithful and true Witness."—He is a witness in his doctrine: it is faithful and true. He is a witness in the conscience by his Spirit: here he speaks truth.

He is faithful and true.—There is no deceit or falsehood in him. He doth not speak one thing and mean another.

He is "the Beginning of the creation of God;" or, as the Apostle expresses it, Col. i. 15, the "First-born of every creature." He was born of God before the creatures. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting." Prov. viii. 22, 23.—"The *Beginning* of the creation," that is, the *Beginner* of it. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth

visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."

DOCTRINE III. Jesus Christ is as true and faithful as truth and faithfulness itself.

We read of the Spirit of truth testifying of Christ, John xv. 26. We read of the word of truth, James i. 18. We read of the way of truth, 2 Peter ii. 2; Psalm cxix. 30.

Now Christ is true and faithful in all his offices and undertakings. He "was faithful to him that appointed him." Heb. iii. 2. He is faithful as an *Ambassador* from God to us. He is faithful as a *Prophet:* he teaches the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He is faithful as a *Priest:* he was "a merciful and faithful high priest:" he was faithful in dying; he is faithful in interceding; he is a faithful and righteous Advocate. 1 John ii. 1. He is faithful as a *King:* he distributes rewards to his friends, and punishment to his enemies *faithfully.*

This discovers the evil of unbelief. Unbelief denies the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. We have his promise written and sealed, and his oath and pledge for the performance, but unbelief gives him the lie.

Receive, then, the Gospel. "This is a faithful

saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Then be like Christ. Faithful as he is faithful. Be so towards God. The Epistle to the Ephesians is directed to the "*faithful* in Christ Jesus." "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Rev. xvii. 14. "Well done, good and faithful servant," will be the address to some in the great day. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Be faithful towards men. Be just, be honest, be upright.

"*I know thy works.*"—This is the preface to all the Epistles. When he commends: "I know thy works." When he reproves: "I know thy works." Those that reprove, ought to know that which they reprove for; know it to be a fault; know it to be done by him whom they reprove. Yet sometimes it is lawful to reprove upon report, upon suspicion.

DOCTRINE IV. All our works are known to Jesus Christ.

Works are either good or evil. Both are known. "The eyes of the Lord are in *every* place, beholding the evil and the good."

Jesus Christ knows all we *have* done. Our sins are written in his book, though long since committed; and so exactly, as that he can set them in order. Psalm l. 21. He knows all our duties. Malachi iii. 16, 17.

Jesus Christ knows all we *do*. Nothing is hid from him.

Jesus Christ knows all we *will* do. "Thou understandest my thoughts afar off." Ps. cxxxix. 2. He knows all the evil, all the good, that we shall do. He knew Hazael would kill his master; that Peter would deny his Lord.

Jesus Christ knows all we *would* do. He knew the men of Keilah would deliver up David. 1 Sam. xxiii. 12.

Jesus Christ knows all the *circumstances* of all that we do. He knows what sins are infirmities, and what are wilful—he knows what our ends are. He knows what duties are done in hypocrisy, and what in sincerity.

He knows all this because he is God.—God the Creator: "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" Ps. xciv. 9. He is omniscient, he is omnipresent: "Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord?" Jer. xxiii. 24. He has a candle in our bosoms: Prov. xx. 27. He is God the Judge: Ps. xciv. 10. He is the Ruler of the world: there is nothing

done, if good, without him; and if evil, without his permission *. None but God knows: "I, the Lord, search the heart; I try the reins."

He knows all in the most perfect and exact manner imaginable, inside and outside. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. iv. 13; John ii. 25; 1 Sam. xvi. 17. He knows all things infallibly, so as to pass sentence.

O! that this truth might sink down into our hearts. It is a truth better known than applied. Let us improve it.

1. In reference to that which is evil.—'All my evil works are known to Jesus Christ.' Then take heed of doing that which is evil. How much to blame are we, that we think not of this more. O what a curb it would be! There is a dial in London with this inscription—*Cave! Deus videt—Beware! God sees you.* He sees, that is, he *observes.* "His eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men." He sees, he hates sin. Heb. i. 13. "God knoweth the secrets of the heart."

* On this profound subject, much that is important and valuable may be seen in a Sermon entitled "The Divine Glory displayed in the Permission of Sin," by the Rev. J. P. Smith, D. D.; and especially in "An Essay on the Equity of Divine Government, and the Sovereignty of Divine Grace," by the late Rev. and devout Edward Williams, D.D. both editions.

Ps. xliv. 21.—Remember! He sees me that saw Achan hide the accursed thing—that saw Gehasi run after Naaman—that saw David in his chamber—and the woman of Samaria at the well of Jacob. He hears all we say; he knows all we think. You may think well of yourselves, but he searches: "Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." 2 Cor. x. 18. Men may think well of you, but "God knoweth your *hearts;* for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

2. In reference to God's people, for their encouragement.—Jesus Christ knows all you do. All the good, so as to like and approve. All the stirrings of your graces—your faith, love, patience, zeal, Rev. ii. 2; all your meltings, tears, sighs, and groans; all your prayers and desires, Matt. vi. 32; all your alms; all your strugglings against sin. Now consider. "I know your works." I, who set you on work. If servants' work please their master, what care they what by-standers say?—I, who am infinitely wise, I approve. No matter what children and fools say.—I, who have wherewithal to reward and recompense you. 1 Cor. xv. 58; Matt. vi. 4, 6, 18. The world's approbation will not save us, its censures cannot damn us.—I, who am just, and will be sure to do you right: I, the faithful and true Wit-

ness—I, who love you, and whom you love. No matter what enemies say.—I, who will make all the world approve first or last. Dying men speak well of the ways of God.

There are certain seasons when this will comfort.

(1.) When we think our work too hard for us. Jesus Christ knows what my work is—it was he that set me on work: the world doth not think what a burden lies upon me. This will apply to ministers.

(2.) When our work is secret. Matt. vi.

(3.) When we are evil spoken of for good works, and have false interpretations given of them. "Behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high. My friends scorn me; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God."

(4.) When we are well spoken of----tempted to pride. Jesus Christ knows all my spots.

(5.) When we begin to be weary of well-doing. God remembers and knows all that is past. Suppose in praying for some mercy.

(6.) When we do not know ourselves. God knows us. 1 John iii. 20. "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." John xxi. 17.

(7.) When we would know our sins. One said, he would give all his estate for a catalogue of his sins. Go to God, and say, as one of old, "That

which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more."

"*Thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*"—Here is a charge or indictment: "Thou art neither cold nor hot." Here is the proof of that charge: "I know thy works." Here is also the sentence pronounced: "I will spue thee out of my mouth."

DOCTRINE V. A lukewarm temper in religion is that which very much offends Jesus Christ.

It appears it offends him by two things mentioned here:—his serious wish; "I would thou wert cold or hot:" his sad threatening; "I will spue thee out of my mouth," as that which is nauseous: I will have nothing to do with thee: I will cast thee up, and cast thee off: I will remove thy candlestick."

1. Let us inquire into the nature of this disease.

What is it to be lukewarm in religion? It is to be neither cold nor hot; that is, neither profane nor religious, neither for godliness nor against it: to be halting between two, God and the world, Christ and sin: to be divided in affection. Its

nature appears by the contrary, which is zeal, a high strain of affections towards God. To be divided in desire towards Christ: to be divided in practice; indifferent to duties: 'What need of all this ado?' Jer. xlviii. 10. When a slight excuse will put us by duty, it is a sign we are indifferent. When we are forward for a time, and soon weary, we are lukewarm. Mark x. 17. "O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away."

2. Consider the cause of this disease.

One cause is base flesh-pleasing. Religion, in the power of it, requires self-denial; it requires the crossing of lust. Fear of losing the favour of men, is another cause of it. So is ignorance of the excellency of religion. Now

(1.) He that is lukewarm finds no inward delight in drawing nigh to God. A kind of sensual delight he may have. Isaiah lviii.

(2.) He that is lukewarm gets not a jot forward in religion: he makes no progress.

(3.) He that is lukewarm makes the world his business, and what he does in religion is but by the bye.

The more like we are to any thing, unless we be really that thing, so much the worse. An ape is like a man. A bat is like a bird and a mouse, and is devoured by both. So a lukewarm person is disapproved of God and the world. A luke-

warm profession of religion is easy—no opposition from Satan.

3. Consider the evil of it.

It is a dishonour to religion; it is hypocrisy; it is deceitfulness. Mal. i. 14. He that is not with religion is against it. It is damnable: those that are zealous in a false way, it is likely, will fare better than those that are lukewarm in the right way. Besides, it will never do any good to those that stand by. 2 Cor. ix. 2.

4. Direct you how to cure it*.

* A company of Christians, about twenty, met together with their minister, in the year 1588, to consider their state as professors of the Gospel. The first question proposed was, Whether they had not left their "first love?" I have, said one; and I have, said another; and so said they all. The next query was, Wherein? Upon which a particular account was taken in writing; in the view of which, the place was Bochim—a place of weeping. But it was asked further, Is there no remedy? Upon which an affirmaative reply was made; "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works." Rev. ii. 5. A list was then prepared of proper works to be done:—

1. That they would fast and pray more than ordinary.
2. Labour t oknow their hearts better.
3. Keep their hearts with all diligence.
4. Attend upon ordinances, with endeavours to profit by them.
5. Set apart one quarter of an hour every day for secret converse with God. And,
6. Communicate their proficiency one to another.

The whole concluded with a solemn covenant in writing to act accordingly.

Roger's Seven Treatises, p. 477.

Make religion your business. Strive to enter in at the strait gate. Be lively in religion.

"*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

Here we have, 1. A lukewarm Christian's good opinion of himself. "Thou sayest"—either in thy heart, or with thy tongue boastingly—"I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."

2. The sad condition he is in, whatever he thinks—"wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked."

3. The way to get out of that condition—by coming to Christ.

DOCTRINE VI. It is a common mistake among professors of religion, to think their condition is good, when it is very bad.

Shew, 1. The grounds of this mistake.

(1.) The cunning of Satan.—He has many devices to nourish false persuasions of this nature. As the Spirit of God witnesses with God's children, so the evil spirit with formal hypocrites. He transforms himself into an angel of light. He

persuaded our first parents that their condition was not good enough; and so they undid themselves, by seeking to better themselves. He being a *spirit*, has immediate access to the soul. And he is a deceiver, a liar. Rev. xii. 9.

(2.) Pride and self-love in the heart.—"The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee." Obad. iii. We are loth to know any evil of ourselves; like some fond parents as to their children. Adam could not endure to see himself naked.

(3.) Outward prosperity.—"Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way." Isaiah lvii. 10. Jer. xliv. 17. Hos. xii. 7, 8.

(4.) General mercy.—He that made us, will not he save us? Note, when mercy was mentioned, justice was proclaimed too. Exod. xxxiv.

(5.) Common Gospel privileges.—"Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these." Jer. vii. 4. Amos vi. 1. Matt. iii. 9. John viii. 33—39. Whereas, "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*."

(6.) The good opinion which neighbours have of us.—This was what hardened the Pharisees.

Add to these: comparing ourselves with others who are worse;—the quiet deaths of many such as ourselves;—ignorance: I say I am rich, because I am blind. Counterfeits are mistaken for gold.

Lukewarm persons see few go beyond them, or do more than they do: whereas the best side is inward—you know not what is done in *secret*. They hear the world cry out against those who are strict, and are terrified.

Shew, 2. The mischiefs that accompany this mistake.

(1.) It hardens against all the means made use of for our salvation, both in public and private. The word preached is as an arrow shot against a brazen wall. This is the cause of unsuccessful labours. Matt. ix. 12, 13. Such as these, were they that derided Christ, Luke xvi. 14, 15. Such are the hardest to be converted. Prov. xxvi. 12; Matt. xxi. 31.

(2.) It is not our good opinion of ourselves that makes our condition any the better. A beggar *fancying* himself rich, is not a penny the richer.

(3.) When we come to die, our mistake will be made manifest. Death will tear off the veil. And then, O what shame! what calling upon the rocks and mountains to hide from the Divine presence, and from those who have heard us say we are rich, lest they should now see our misery! Then we shall be made to believe what now we will not. Isaiah xxix. 7, 8.

(4.) God is greatly provoked by our self-deceivings. Those who say, "Stand by thyself, come not near unto me; for I am holier than

thou: these are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." Isa. lxv. 5. Deut. xxix. 19.

Shew, 3. The evidences of a man that sees not his need of Christ.

He prizes him not.—Had he ever seen himself a sinner, and found relief at the cross of Christ, O what thoughts would he have of the Saviour!

He prizes not the means of grace.

Be willing to suspect your condition. Try it impartially. Inform yourselves aright concerning the nature of God: he is just and righteous;—concerning your own nature: you were born in sin;—concerning the nature of the Law: it is holy and spiritual: and concerning the nature of sin: it is deceiving and destroying. Look into the grace of the Gospel.

Shew, 4. The difference between one who is *truly* rich, and another that only *thinks* he is so.

He that is truly rich, maintains holy jealousy over himself—the other doth not.

He that is truly rich, loves searching truths—the other says, "Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.

"*Thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*"

All which expressions are heaped together, to set forth the sad condition of a natural man. Note,

God doth many times pass a very different sentence concerning us, to what we do concerning ourselves.

DOCTRINE VII. Every natural man is a wretched, miserable, unhappy man.

Every natural man—that is, every many in his natural condition; not effectually called, not born again, not justified, not sanctified, not changed, not regenerate.

This is true: for God is his enemy, he is in bondage to the devil, and he is in danger of hell every day. He is Ταλαίπωρος, *wretched*—the same word as is used, Rom. vii. 24. Ελεεινὸς, a man to be *pitied*. He is the more miserable, because he is not sensible of his misery.

This is true of every natural man, of whatever sex, male or female—whatever age, young or old—whatever condition, rich or poor—whatever may be his parts or gifts, whatever may be his profession, and whatever may be his hopes—"Miserable *and poor*."

DOCTRINE VIII. Every natural man is a poor man.

Πτωχὸς signifies the *extremity* of poverty. He is poor, not only comparatively—compared with

others—but *absolutely*. He is poor, not in spirit—*that* would be a blessing—but poor in spirituals. This is the case, whatever may be his condition in outward things.

1. He wants necessaries for his soul, Luke x. 42. He has no raiment, no righteousness, to cover him. He is naked, except his own rags. He has no food, neither the bread nor the water of life. He has never tasted any thing but husks—he is in a starving condition.

2. He employs himself about poor things. The world and sin take up his time and his thoughts. He is a servant of servants: a drudge, a slave. The design he drives at, is a poor one—even the very best and highest—even kingdoms.

3. He is poor in friends. He has no friendship in heaven; none in his own conscience.

4. He owes ten thousand talents, and hath not wherewith to pay a farthing. He owes for every mercy: he owes for every sin.—Then,

(1.) Envy not the unregenerate. Pity them; and the rather, because they pity not themselves. Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Do what you can to help poor wretches out of this condition.

(2.) Bless God, who hath delivered you out of this wretched condition—you who are changed by grace—and bear his will patiently.

(3.) This subject speaks terror to such as are in their natural condition.—When God spake to

Moses as a *friend*, he trembled. But he is thine *enemy*, sinner! All his attributes—his justice, his holiness, his wisdom, his power, yea, his mercy—are thine enemies. All his creatures—angels, beasts, stones—are opposed to you. "God is angry with the wicked every day." Psalm vii. 11. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. x. 31. There are *treasures* of wrath reserved for the ungodly. Rom. ii. 5. "The wrath of God is *revealed* from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Rom. i. 18. It is revealed in the Old and New Testament—nay, before either. Jude 14. It is revealed in his providence—sometimes in their way, sometimes in their end. See Job xx., &c.

But to you who are born again, rich in faith, the prospect, as well as your state, is different. "Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Let me exhort you all to fly to Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life:" and, "whosoever cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out."

SERMON IV.

PSALM lxxvii. 19.

Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

THESE words may be understood three ways:—

1. *Literally*—concerning the sea and the great waters, wherein the way, and path, and footsteps of God's wisdom, power, and mercy, are to be seen. For as the heavens declare the glory of God, so doth the sea also. It does so in the constant ebbing and flowing of it, which hath puzzled the wit of man to give a reason of. It does so likewise in the bounds of it: though higher than the earth, yet it is kept from overflowing it: and with what? Not rocks and mountains; but sand. "Thou hast set a bound, that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth." Ps. civ. 9. It does so also in the multitudes of creatures that are in it, both great and small: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy

riches; so is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts." It does so too in the various events that happen to passengers who sail upon it: "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." This is a proper meditation for the Sabbath-day, as it is one of the great works of the great God.

2. *Historically* — in allusion to the story of the Israelites passing between Egypt and the wilderness, under the conduct of Moses*. "Thou

* "See how God dealt with the people of the Jews, in their deliverance from Egypt. They had been bondmen there no less than 430 years, and had waited all that time for the accomplishment of the promise, but no deliverance came. It was rather every day worse and worse with them: their task-masters were more cruel, their tale of brick doubled. Notwithstanding all their groaning and crying under their burdens, yet God regards them not, till his *own* time came. 'And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.' Exod. xii. 41. Well: they are no sooner out of Egypt but Pharaoh is upon them with a numerous army: upon either hand of them there were high hills and mountains, and just before them the sea: so that they knew not which way to escape his fury. But now is the time for the Lord to appear. 'And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.' Thus, when God's people are at the lowest, then is the time for God to appear for their salvation and deliverance. As long as they have any way of escaping

leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." When the Lord parted the sea in the midst, and made a lane for them to go through dry shod, it was a seasonable mercy, for they were in extremity — Pharaoh was behind them, and castles on either side. It was a strange mercy—such as never was before nor since. And it was an exemplary mercy—for encouragement to trust God in the greatest straits and difficulties ever after.

3. *Figuratively.* — It is an expression to set forth the *depth* of God's ways. "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains: thy judgments are a great deep." Like the deep waters, that cannot be fathomed.—It may set forth, also, their *darkness* and *intricacy*. Like the way of a ship n the sea (Prov. xxx. 18, 19), whereof no footsteps are left behind whereby to trace it, no more than the way of a serpent or an eagle.

DOCTRINE. The ways of God towards the children of men are oftentimes exceeding dark, unsearchable, and undiscernible.

left them from without, by the assistance of second causes, so long God leaves them to their own counsels; but when all fails, when they are brought to so great straits that they know not which way to turn them, then is his usual method to set about the work of their deliverance. The night is ever the darkest just before day dawns." — *Mr. Henry, Manuscript.*

What ways?

I. The way of his decree of election.—Election is that decree of God, whereby, from al eternity, according to the counsel of his own will, he hath freely chosen and ordained in Christ a certain number of the children of men to grace and glory, for the manifestation of his own mercy. "I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob." Mal. i. 2. Now here is the mystery; why Jacob, and not Esau? No reason can be given, but, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." It was not for works foreseen: "For the children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger: as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." And then here is a mystery, that so few should be chosen—a remnant—and so many left to perish. All are equally guilty: then why not all either saved, or damned? If all were saved, where would be the glory of Justice? If all were damned, where would be the glory of Mercy?

II. The way of redemption by Jesus Christ.—"Without controversy, great is the mystery of

godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. iii. 16. The angels pry into it, 1 Pet. i. 12. Is it not mysterious, that the Son of God should become a man; the Ancient of Days an infant? That in our nature he should suffer as he did? That the Physician should die to heal the patient? That herein he should pass by angels! Behold a mystery of *wisdom* in the contrivance and of *love* in the execution of human redemption.

III. The way of conversion is a dark way.—It is so, if we consider what unlikely persons are converted: not the rich and noble, but the poor, for meanness, in general; not the Pharisee, but the Publican, for vileness. Crooked, knotty pieces are hewn, and squared, and made polished stones in the heavenly temple. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."—It is so, if you consider by what unlikely means sinners are converted—by the foolishness of preaching. As Jericho was taken by the sound of rams' horns, so, often, weak instruments are used in conversion; yea, many times the weakest preachers in respect of gifts.—Con-

sider, too, at what an unlikely time the change frequently takes place. Some are converted when come to hear a sermon to laugh, nay, when actually mocking. "Others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up, with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, &c.....Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts ii. 13, 14, 37. Some are caught when come to catch the preacher: see John vii.: Paul was met with when on his way to Damascus to persecute the saints.

IV. Comforting way is an unknown way.—None can tell how comfort is formed in the heart of a believer — light in the darkness, as if the sun should rise at midnight. Sometimes there is a great deal of grace and no comfort; sometimes a little grace and much comfort. Sometimes comfort is communicated by silent whispers, sometimes in an ordinance, sometimes unexpectedly.

V. The way of hardening sinners is an unknown way.—There is more of this work done every day than we are aware of. And how? it is unseen, and in the dark—by sermons, by providences, by scandals. What a dark, hardening providence was that to Jeroboam, recorded in 1 Kings xiii.:

"And this thing became sin* to the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth."

VI. The ways of Divine Providence, both towards the church of God in general, and towards particular persons, are unknown ways.—As there are in the Scriptures some passages easy, and others difficult, so it is in providence. There are wheels within wheels. Ezek. i. 16.

1. This is true, as to the church in general.

Under the *Old Testament*, while enclosed within the pale of one people. "In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel. In Salem, also, is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion." Psalm lxxvi. 1, 2.

Consider the choosing of them. "Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more

* "Either an occasion of sin, and means of hardening all his posterity in their idolatry; or, *a punishment*, for so the word *sin* is oft used. This his obstinate continuance in his idolatry, after such warnings, was the utter ruin of all his family."—*Poole's Annotations*, vol. I. in loc. This was a favourite work with Mr. Henry, and he bequeathed a copy of it to each of his four daughters. See his Life, chap. IV.

in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you." Deut. vii. 6—8. They were as stubborn and froward a people as ever were.

Consider the ruling, preserving, and defending of them. First, in Egypt, for four hundred and thirty years. Then, in the wilderness, for forty years: they were fed with manna, and with water out of the rock. Then, in Canaan, under the Judges and Kings. Sometimes they were in prosperity, at other times low and afflicted. Consider their preservation in Esther's time. Consider their deliverance out of Babylon. See Zech. i. 8. All which speaks darkness.

Consider the dispensation which they were under. It was a *dark* dispensation—dark ordinaces—a veil—a cloud.

Consider the casting of them off. See Rom. xi. The manner of it, so fearful and sad; the continuance of it, for so many ages.

Under the *New Testament* much appears to shew that God's way towards the church is "in the sea."

Consider the founders of it; Christ, and his apostles—mean and despicable persons, altogether unlikely for such an undertaking.

Consider the spreading of it—over all the world, by preaching and suffering. Is it not mys-

terious, that the blood of martyrs should be the seed of the church?*

Consider the upholding of it, in spite of men and devils.

Consider the reforming of the church when corrupted. In Germany†, by Luther, a poor Monk:

* "When the Roman Empire was at the highest, and was most inflamed with anger against the Christians; when the learning of the philosophers, the power of the emperors, and the strength of the whole world was set against them; the Christians grew more flourishing and numerous by those very means which were used to destroy them. Not only a new succession of saints sprang up from the martyrs' ashes, but their flames were the occasion of warming some so much with a heavenly fire, that some persecutors have become preachers. The persecutions of the martyrs did but heighten their graces, send them to the place of rest, and enlarge their robes of glory. Herod's murdering the children to destroy Him that was born King of the Jews, made his birth more conspicuous in the world: snuffing the candle makes it burn the clearer. God doth often lay the scene of his amazing providences in very dismal afflictions: as the limner first puts on the dusky colours on which he intends to draw the portraiture of some illustrious beauty. The humiliation, persecution, and death of the Son of God, was the dusky colour upon which God drew that amazing piece of Divine love and wisdom in man's salvation, which the eyes of saints and angels will be fixed on with ravishing admiration to all eternity."—*Charnock on Providence.* Works, vol. I. p. 542, edition 1699.

† "Let me advise those that have an inclination to read histories of former transactions, to which men are naturally addicted, to make this your end, to observe the strange

in England, by Edward, a child; by Elizabeth, a woman. "Not by might, nor power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Consider the heresies, errors, and corruptions still suffered in it. Also the divisions of God's people *.

He suffers plots to proceed till just ready for execution: as Haman's; as the Powder Plot. It would not be wisdom in men to do so.

He brings his people to the very brink of mercy, as to shore; and then hurries them back again: as the children of Israel, when journeying to Canaan.

He makes the same thing to be his enemies' ruin, and his people's preservation: "And the

providences of God in the world, and how admirably he hath made them subservient to the interest of the church: which will be the most profitable way of reading them; whereby they will not only satisfy your curiosity, but establish your Christianity."—*Charnock on Providence*, p. 536.

* "One would think this, of all other things, should shake the foundation of it; yet God orders even these to the good of the church. Paul and Barnabas, two great apostles, fell out: the contention comes to be very sharp, a thing naturally of very ill consequence in two of the prime guides of Christianity, and at the laying the first foundation of it; but the Gospel gains ground; one sails to Cyprus, and the other travels into Syria. Perhaps, had not this quarrel been between them, and they thus disjointed from one another, some of those poor souls had never, or at least not so soon, have heard of the Gospel mercy."—*Charnock on Providence*, p. 541.

Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these." Exod. xiv. 19, 20. The same sea was a grave to the Egyptian host, and a lane to the Israelites. The same fire which did not hurt Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, slew those men that took them up. Dan. iii.

God's "way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters," when a good cause is worsted, and a bad cause succeeds, at least for a time. This is true,

2. As to particular persons.

It is a dark and intricate providence, that the godly should be afflicted and the wicked prosper. "As for me," said the Psalmist, "my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped..... when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.....until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." Ps. lxxiii. 2, 3, 17. "Righteous art thou, O Lord," said Jeremiah, "when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" Jer. xii. 1.

Providence is dark and intricate in the advance-

ment of some and disappointment of others: "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south." Some are suddenly made rich, others poor. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill."

It is so in the bounds of life*. To some, God hath appointed a month; to some, a week, a day, an hour; to others, fifty, sixty, eighty, nay, a hundred years. Yet all must live alike for ever.

It is so in the manner and circumstances of death and dissolution. "One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them." To see a wicked man die like a lamb, and a godly man's sun set under a cloud†, is a strange dispensation.

* "1656. February. In our parish of Worthenbury, there was this observable providence: At the beginning of the month, Mr. John Broughton died, aged 70 years; about the middle, a son of Randle Meredith's, aged about 30; towards the end, a child of Mr. Lloyd, of Halghton, aged 14 months. I see no age exempts from the stroke of death. He comes sometimes at midnight, sometimes at noon, sometimes at cock-crowing. Lord, fit us for our change."—*Mr. Henry's Diary, MS.*

† "1674, May 8th. Mr. Beal, one of the auditors of the

It is so in rewarding unproportionably: "These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day." Godly parents often leave behind them ungodly children.

It is so, in that two men should be guilty of the same fault, the one punished and the other escape, nay, perhaps be advanced.

It is so, also, in persons being preserved and provided for by unlikely means *.

Some reasons may be noticed, why "God's way is in the sea, his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known."

revenue, having been long afflicted with grievous melancholy, threw himself out of his garret-window into his garden, and died immediately of the fall. He was a good man, and feared God above many. An astonishing providence! Lord, how terrible art thou sometimes to thine own children! Mr. Baxter, kissing the dead body, said, he did believe his soul to be as happy as he did desire his own soul to be." — *Mr. Henry's Diary, MS.*

* "1661. Jane Humphreys was most affectionately tender of her husband, who lay fourteen months ill; he dying Feb. 13th. The week after, a sister of his died, who was well at her brother's burial; and by her death, land fell to J. Humphreys; which I look upon as a small token from the Lord, of his approbation of her care and love towards her afflicted husband, being yet persuaded he hath a better thing in store for her. 'A Father of the fatherless, a Judge of the widow, is God in his holy habitation.'" — *Mr. Henry's Diary, MS.*

1. He chooses to walk in such dark and intricate ways for his own glory — to manifest to all the world his eternal Power and Godhead.

As the works of creation do this, and those works especially which are past finding out — as the wind, John iii. 8; the ebbing and flowing of the sea; the sympathies and antipathies of several creatures; the frame and composition of the body of man; and many other things, which our ignorance of makes the learned themselves fly to occult causes — so the works of Providence in the government of the world, especially those that are more dark and mysterious. Like some curious picture, where there is much art shewn, every one inquires who drew it; whereas that which is plain and ordinary, no matter who. "And they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" It was a dark providence that God should suffer the Egyptian magicians so long to imitate his own miracles; but it was to harden Pharaoh*; and in the end, God had praise.

* "Pharaoh had hardened his own heart against the groans and cries of the oppressed Israelites, and shut up the bowels of his compassion from them; and now God, in a way of righteous judgment, hardens his heart against the conviction of the miracles and the terror of the plagues."—*Rev. Matt. Henry's Comment. on Exod.* iv. 21.

2. He chooses to walk in such dark ways to try the graces of his people.

To try their humility.—" Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee."—To keep them low in their own eyes. For this purpose God reasoned with Job, chap. xxxviii.; and it had that effect upon him: " Behold," said he, " I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further."

To try their industry.—It affords them matter for their daily study and observation *. " Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." Psalm cvii. 43. " The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." Psalm cxi. 2.

To try their faith and dependence.—Hereby he tries if they will trust him when they cannot see him. As Abraham: God had promised him a

* The watchful observer of Providence often sees the accuracy of Dr. Paley's remark, that, in the works and ways of God, " *great* and *little* are terms of no meaning."—" A *reed* of an unknown species, thrown upon the coast of the Azores, suggested to *Christopher Columbus* the idea of the existence of a western *world.*" See *St. Pierre's Studies of Nature,* vol. II. p. 331. Shoberl's edition.

son, but he must be a hundred years old first — and then, that son must be offered up.

3. God chooses to walk in such dark ways in reference to the wicked.

To puzzle and confound the carnal wisdom of the world. —" Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" 1 Cor. i. 20. " In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him "—(Eccl. vii. 14)—to find fault with or amend.

It lays a stone of stumbling in their way.— " Who is *wise*, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the *transgressors* shall fall therein."

It fills their faces with shame, when they think every thing is as heart could wish, and then, on a sudden, are disappointed — as in Esther's time*;

* " So in that great deliverance of the church in Nehemiah's time, when the people of God met with so much opposition in their work of building the temple, from Tobiah, Sanballat, and the rest of their confederates: and when, after all, they saw the work prosper, see what effect it had upon their spirits, Neh. vi. 16: they look upon one another like thieves caught in the very act of stealing; or like a kennel of hungry dogs, that have been all day long hunting the game, and at night lose it in a wood."— *Mr. Henry. Manuscript.*

as in redemption by Christ. The devil thought there was no danger when he had him hanged and buried; but then it was that he conquered death, and spoiled principalities and powers.

Use I. By way of caution and instruction, in three things.

1. Though the ways of God are sometimes dark and mysterious *, yet they are always carried on in infinite wisdom; and the more dark, the more wisdom. There are eyes in the wheels, Ezek. i. As not one expression in the Scripture could have been better expressed, because God spake it; so not one passage of Providence could have been better ordered, because directed by Infinite Wisdom. "He led them forth by the *right* way" — though much about — "that they might go to a city of habitation." This is a good argument for patience, under all events. Take heed of charging God with folly!

2. They are always righteous — according to exact rules of judgment and equity. "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." Ps. cxlvii. 17. "Clouds and darkness

* "This mysteriousness and darkness of Providence adds a lustre to it: as stones set in ebony, though the ground be dark, make the beauty and sparkling the clearer." — *Charnock.*

are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Ps. xcvii. 2.

3. They are always for the good of his church and people. "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of *Israel*, the *Saviour*." It is his great design to glorify himself in the salvation of a remnant; and in subserviency to this, all the wheels of providence move and act. "And we know that all things work together for *good* to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom. viii. 28. "What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it." Isa. xiv. 32.

II. As there are mysteries in the ways of God and his providence, so there are also in the ways of religion and godliness.

As God is a hidden God, so his people are a hidden people, Ps. lxxxiii. 3 — not only for safety, but for secrecy: see Rev. ii. 17. They are alive, and yet dead. Col. iii. 3. They have nothing, and yet possess all things. 2 Cor. vi. 10. They love themselves, and yet loath and deny themselves. They are not satisfied with the whole world, and yet are content with little. They abound in works of righteousness, and yet abhor a righteousness of works.

III. Exhortation *.

1. Let us not censure and misjudge Providence because we do not understand it; but rather wait till that which is hid be made manifest. Do not say his ways are unequal, Ezek. xviii. 29; which we are apt to do when we look upon them through a wrong medium. A child sees cloth cut in pieces, grapes crushed, and thinks they are spoiled.

2. Learn, in all events, to live by faith. If *all* events of Providence were as some are, sense would serve to live by; but "the just shall live by his *faith*."

3. Long for the day of judgment, which will make manifest. It will be a day of "revelation of the righteous judgment of God." "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known."

* See Flavel's excellent Treatise on Providence.

SERMON V.

JOHN viii. 37.

But ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

THESE are the words of our Lord Jesus, being part of a discourse which he had with a company of Jews cavilling at his doctrine. Though he spake as never man spake nor is ever like to speak again—with so much wisdom, authority, and meekness—yet he met with those that quarreled with him, and contradicted him, and were never the better, but the worse, for his discourses. No wonder, then, if *we* meet with such; for the "servant is not greater than his Lord:" nay, "it is enough for the servant to be as his Lord;" as he himself hath warned us before, speaking of this very matter. Matt. x. 24, 25. In the whole verse we may note three things:

1. The Jews' great privilege: "I know that ye are Abraham's seed." This they often boasted of (ver. 33), and our Lord Jesus yields it to them.

But this alone would not serve their turn: "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." —Outward privileges are not *saving* privileges.

2. Their great wickedness: "Ye seek to kill me." This was true enough, for they had attempted it once and again, and at last they did it. "Now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you *the truth*." Horrid ingratitude!

3. The ground, cause, and reason of it: "Because my word hath no place in you." There were some that he preached to who believed in him, and loved him, and followed him. Those were such in whom his word had place. But as for others, that refused, rejected, slighted him — nay, sought to kill him — the reason of it was, because his word had no place in them.

DOCTRINE. That the true reason of all the wickedness among people enjoying the word of Christ is, because that word hath no place in them. Or thus:

That when the word of Christ hath no place in a people, there is no good to be expected or looked for in that people.

Shew, I. What is the word of Christ.

The whole word of the Scripture is the word of

Christ: for the whole Scripture points at him, the Old as well as the New Testament: they were written by holy men, as they were moved and acted by his Spirit. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." But especially the word of the Gospel which he came himself from heaven to preach, and did preach accordingly. Now this word is:

1. A word of faith and repentance.—"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel." The Gospel commands all men every where to repent, Acts xvii. 30—that is, to turn from all their sins, to amend their ways and their doings, and to receive and close with the offer of the Gospel. And this is the word that we are preaching to you to-day: our errand is to invite, call, persuade you all, and each of you, to repent. Old and young, male and female, bond and free, O repent, repent.

2. A word of pardon and reconciliation.—Gospel is as much as "good news"—"glad tidings." He

came and preached *peace*, Eph. ii. 17: declaring to the children of men, that, upon their faith and repentance, through the merit of his blood, their sins should be forgiven, their persons justified, accepted, and saved. And this is good news indeed—the best that ever came from heaven to earth.

3. A word of holiness and new obedience. — It is called "The truth which is after godliness," Titus i. 1. Man was made after the image of God, which consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. But by sin he lost it. Now the design of the Gospel is to restore us to that image again; to "purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

4. A word of suffering, patience, and self-denial. — "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." It requires that we pull out right eyes, and cut off right hands — that is, that we thwart, and cross, and contradict our carnal desires and appetites in things most pleasing to our corrupt nature, when they are not consistent with the interests of religion; that we hate father, mother, and friends; part with liberty, estate, life itself, when thereunto called; taking joyfully the spoiling of our goods. This is one reason why it takes not place.

5. A word of salvation and damnation; of reve-

lation and discovery both of rewards and punishments, especially in the life to come, beyond what was ever revealed before. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Quick work! 'I will be at a word with you.'—And then it tells us what that salvation is: it is to be made happy and blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity; it is to receive a crown and kingdom that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens. It tells us what damnation is: it is to lie for ever in a lake that burns with fire and brimstone, where the worm dies not; it is to be separated from the presence of His glory*.—This is the word of Christ, the word of the Gospel.

Shew, II. What place this record of Christ should have in us.

1. It should have a place in our understanding.—Our duty is to *know* the truth, and to be acquainted with the mystery of godliness; and to stir up ourselves, in the use of means, that we may be

* There is something peculiarly affecting in Dr. Williams's idea as to the misery of the finally impenitent. "The sufferings of hell are not an *arbitrary* appointment, or something *extraneous* to the real state of the sinful mind superadded to it. It rather consists in the *loss* of the chief good, and a *consciousness* of that loss; which is a never-dying worm, and unquenchable fire." — *Doddridge's Works*, vol. V. p. 389, note.

more and more instructed in it.—Consider what an excellent thing it is: "This is life eternal, that they might *know* thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John xvii. 3. "Yea, doubtless," says St. Paul, "and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."—How profitable is it to the soul. What the sight of the eye, nay, what the use of natural reason is to us as we are men, *that* knowledge in the Gospel is to us as Christians. "The knowledge of the Holy is understanding.....For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased."—How necessary to salvation, and how many perish through the want of it. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."—Now, alas! how many are there in whose understanding the word of Christ hath no place, to whom the Gospel is a hidden Gospel! "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." The book of Scripture is to such a sealed book. Speak we never so plain, still some that hear despise and deride us for our plainness. Yet it is all one — it is but a voice of words to them. "The word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." Nay, how many are willingly ignorant; that say to the Almighty, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge

of thy ways!" They hate knowledge, and shut their eyes against the light.

2. It should have a place in our minds and memories. — God hath given man a faculty above other creatures, to retain and keep what he reads and hears; and to be able to bring it forth from thence, as out of a treasury or store-house, for use afterwards. "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." Now in this treasury, or store-house, the word of Christ in a special manner should have a place. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." He compares the memory to a leaking vessel; and so it is — it is cracked by the Fall. O take heed! The word of Christ is precious liquor poured into it: and the purer and finer any liquor is, the more likely it is to soak through. Take heed, lest you let it slip.

How many are there that can remember other things well enough, but cannot remember a sermon! The reason is, they do not take heed in and after hearing — Or, they do not love the word: there is not that suitableness between the word and their hearts as there is between their hearts and other things, and therefore they remember it not — Or, because it never did them good. Said

David, " I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me." When a word from Christ meets with us — a text, a doctrine, a passage — and doth us good, *that* we shall be likely to remember — Or, they do not understand it.

3. It should have a place in our hearts and affections. — We should esteem it highly, and embrace it dearly: keep it as our treasure, and as the apple of our eye. Prov. vii. 2. It is truly worthy of all this. " This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." " Worthy of all acceptation" — to be embraced with both arms: and what those are, see 2 Tim. i. 13—they are " faith and love." " O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day." " How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to the mouth!" " Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold." Ps. cxix. 97, 103, 127.—Yea, we should love it because of the *purity* of it. Ps. cxix. 140. This cannot be but where there is grace. Because it is pure in itself, without any mixture of error or falsehood; because it enjoins purity to us; therefore we should delight in it: not only because it is pleasant and delightful. See Ezek. xxxiii. 31, &c.

Now, alas! with how many is it otherwise! Some *hate* it, and the preachers of it; counting

them enemies, and the troublers of the land: as Ahab did Micaiah. 1 Kings xxii. 8. Others, who do not hate it, yet are cold in their love to it; indifferent, as to a thing they do not much value. Others love it, but it is in word and tongue only, as long as it pleases and doth not cross them.

4. It should have a place in our lives and conversations.—And this will follow upon the former. Where the word hath place in the heart, it will have place in the life. In the head, indeed, it may be, and go no further; but if once it get into the *heart*, to be written there, and to *dwell* there, it will appear in the life and conversation. "The law of God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide." Ps. xxxvii. 31. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Rom. vi. 17. Then the word of God hath place in us, when we are delivered into it as melted metal into a mould, that receives shape, and form, and figure from it. "Let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ." The word of Christ is a rule of holy living; it teaches people to "deny ungodliness.....and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present evil world."—Now, hath it such a place in you? "If so be that ye have learned Christ, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning

the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

Shew, III. Why the word of Christ hath not such place as it should have in those that hear it.

1. From their natural enmity and antipathy against it. — Our corrupt nature likes no such guests; "because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; neither, indeed, can be." The mind is full of enmity against the truths of the Gospel. Not only incapable of them till savingly enlightened — "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" — but averse to them. The will is full of enmity against the commands of the word: "We will not have this man to reign over us." "We preach Christ crucified; unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

2. The word of Christ hath no place in men, because it is not mixed with faith.—"For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto

them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." As prayer signifies nothing unless faith be mixed with it, so hearing the word of Christ also. They hear it, but they do not believe it.—'Not believe it! What! a Christian, and not believe the word of Christ!' I answer, Yes. There are too many infidels, even among Christians. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isa. liii. 1.—'But that is the Old Testament—what is that to the Gospel?' Nay, see Rom. x. 16: "But they have not all obeyed the *Gospel:* for Isaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" Men do not believe the design of God to save them by Jesus Christ and no other way: if they did, they would not go "about to establish their own righteousness," but would "submit to the righteousness of God." They do not believe what is said of hell and heaven before them: if they did, is it possible they could neglect the word of Christ?—'Oh, but if one should come from the dead, they would believe.' No: "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Luke xvi. 31. It is this unbelief that is the undoing sin of the world. We assent notionally, but we do not consent *practically.* We *say* we believe in God and Jesus Christ, but we do not the things he has said. It is empty, idle

faith: it doth not work. The men of Nineveh believed Jonah, but, "behold, a greater than Jonas is here."

3. The word of Christ hath no place in men because the god of this world, that is, the devil, hath blinded their minds, "lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."—He knows, as the word of Christ goes up, he goes down; as that gets place, he loses place; and therefore he bestirs himself, and turns every stone to hinder men believing. Sometimes he doth all he can to keep the word and us from meeting and coming together. He keeps it from us, by raising up persecution, restraint, trouble, and disturbance to the preachers of it: "We would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again, but Satan hindered us." He keeps us from the word by diversions, excuses, pretences, something else to do. Sometimes, when met, he hinders us from attending on it with that seriousness and fixedness that we should. Perhaps we are drowsy, and he rocks the cradle. Perhaps distracted, and he buzzes: he is Beelzebub — the god of flies. Perhaps he stirs up prejudice against the preacher — his opinion, his meanness, his youth. Sometimes, after our meeting, if the word have begun to get place, he is busy to displace it. "Those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh

away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." Oh, be not ignorant of his devices! and take heed that ye hear, and *how* ye hear.

4. The word of Christ hath no place in men, because other things have place above and before it.—The word of Christ will either be innermost and uppermost in the soul, or not at all. 'Now that must not be.' Why? 'It is reserved for another.' If a cup or vessel be full already, there is no room to receive any thing else. Two things fill the heart, that the word of Christ cannot have place.

(1.) Sin.—This is in the throne. Some beloved sin — some Herodias, some Delilah. We are loth to let it go — it brings pleasure and profit. "Wherefore," saith the Apostle James, "lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." Oh see to this! It is true, sin hath pre-possession, and is the older tenant; but the word of Christ would be the better tenant.

(2.) The world — worldly enjoyments and employments.—These obstruct the reception and entertainment of the word. "And that which fell among thorns, are they which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring

no fruit to perfection." Now, what poor things are these in comparison with the word of Christ! See Matt. xxii.

Shew, IV. How this is the cause of all the wickedness of men. — "Ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you."

1. Because, if the word of Christ might have place, it is of such a nature that it would work, and work effectually, and never cease working, till it had worked sin out of the soul. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." Do you but mix faith with it: otherwise, as it is said of Christ, so it is true of the word of Christ, "He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." Matt. xiii. 58. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. i. 16. Mark: it is so to every one that *believes;* and to none else. Oh the mighty things that the word would do, if you would but let it have a working-room in you!

(1.) For illumination and conviction. — It is compared to light. "The law is light." Prov. vi. 23. The Law is so, and the Gospel too. It

is called " the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ." It will discover to you such sights as you never saw before. It will shew you mysteries hid from ages and generations — mysteries of Divine wisdom, and mysteries of Divine love—yea, and mysteries of iniquity too in your own hearts. But, now, if you will not give it place, how can it do this? If you shut your windows, and shut out the light, so that it shall not have so much as one cranny to shine through, how can it enlighten you? " The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." O then, open thy soul freely. Say, Come, Lord; come, and shine by thy word into every dark corner of my heart: shew me the Father; shew me myself, my sins, my vileness.

The word of God is compared to a glass, wherein we may see the glory of the Lord. " We all, with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." But, then, it must have place in us, that we may behold that glory. The word of God is a looking-glass, wherein we may see our own face, our natural face—how vile we are—but, then, we must not only look, but continue looking therein; otherwise we shall forget what manner of persons we are. " For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding

his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

(2.) For humiliation.—It was the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of Christ, in the mouth of Peter, that pricked those people to the heart, mentioned in Acts ii. and made them cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The word of God is compared to fire—melting; to a hammer—breaking. "Is not my word like a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer, that breaketh the rock in pieces?" But, then, it must have a place. When you come to the word, you should come begging of God, 'Lord, make the word to-day a melting word to my soul.' See Psalm cxlvii. 18.

(3.) For reformation.—The word is compared to water, which cleanses. "Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you." As the waters of Jordan were to Naaman, a leper—but, then, he must wash in them—so are the waters of the sanctuary to the soul that useth them. The word would part thy soul and thy sin, if thou wouldest give it place: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any

two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It would be the seed of God in thee, taking root, and bringing forth fruit, if thou wouldst receive it, and hide it, and give it place. Now, multitudes that hear it, refuse to give it place; and so it doth not work; and so it leaves them not better, but worse, than it found them.

2. Because, where the word is heard and not received, the corruptions of men take occasion from it to exert and put forth themselves so much the more.—As water cast upon lime doth not cool, but kindle it; so the word of Christ occasionally irritates the lusts of men, and makes them not better, but worse. Oftentimes, where there have been the best preachers there are the worst people. This is true not of the word of the *Law* only, by the purity and strictness of it—"But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence;"—but it is true also of the word of the *Gospel:* "There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men; turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." Do you not think that many people, by hearing of peace made for sinners by the blood of Christ, and of his willingness to receive all at any time that come to him, have been hardened to put off and defer the

great concerns of their souls? It is a pity it should be so.

3. Because God doth oftentimes, in a way of righteous judgment, deliver men up to themselves to work all uncleanness with greediness.—The Scripture is full of instances to this purpose. "But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me: so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels." Ps. lxxxi. 11, 12. Isa. vi. 9, 10. Acts xxviii. 23, &c. So the Apostle writes of the Gentiles, the heathen: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, &c.....Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts." Yea, of Christians too it is said, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. This Scripture is the ground of my fears at this day. The world, and England, is full of instances, and I am afraid will be yet fuller, if we still refuse place to the word of Christ preached among us.

Shew, V. The application.

1. By way of examination.—I have a question or two from this doctrine this day to put to you, as in the sight and presence of God: and I be-

seech you, let us each of us put it to ourselves; you to yourselves, and I to myself; and let us mark the answer. Let us not do as Pilate did, who asked Christ, What is truth? but stayed not till he could tell him.

The question is: Hath the word of Christ a place in you? And what place? For ought I know, this is as sufficient a mark of trial whereby to know our spiritual state, as any other. "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father: Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." 1 Thess. i. 3, 4. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John x. 27. "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." 2 Cor. iv. 3.

It may be it hath a place in your heads. You know the truth, and can remember a sermon and discourse of it, and repeat it, and perhaps commend the preacher. It is well. But hath it a place in thy heart and life? Dost thou esteem and value the word? Dost thou embrace it? Is it welcome to thee; then most welcome, when it touches thee in a sore place, and meets with thy iniquity, and lays thee open to thyself? And dost thou walk according to it?

It may be it hath a place; but is that place a prison, or a throne? Some are said to *hold*

the truth in unrighteousness, Rom. i. 18. They cannot keep the word from coming in: it will come in in spite of them. Yes, but they will do what they can to lay it fast enough. How? By multiplying sins against knowledge, conviction, conscience; by suppressing all the stirrings and strivings of the word; stifling it, keeping it down. And in this sense the word of God is bound. 2 Tim. ii. 9. But where it hath place as it should have, it is in the throne, and rules the man; it has the uppermost place: every thought is in obedience to it. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Or, at least, it is desired it may be so, and the endeavours are accordingly. 'Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way."

You know the word of Christ is a word of faith and repentance, holiness and new obedience, patience and self-denial. Now, hath this word an awe upon you, an authority over you? Or, can you, in the very face and light of it, be vain, foolish, proud, worldly, froward, censorious; neglecting prayer, reading, meditation, alms-doing, and trample the calls of the word and Spirit to these

things under your feet, while lust and sin have a place in your affections? This is a bad sign.

It has a place in you, but is it a dwelling-place, a working-place? Is it not a lodging-place, as a wayfaring man that turns aside to tarry for a night, that I would it should have? But it *should* have a *dwelling-place*. "Let the word of Christ *dwell* in you richly in all wisdom." Many taste it for trial, and fall away. See Heb. vi. Like the wind upon a rock, it blusters a while, but the rock moves not: it remains where it was.

2. By way of exhortation.—I pray and beseech you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and for the love of the Spirit, that you will let the word of Christ have a place in you: that you will read and hear it as often as you can have opportunity. And when you do hear it, that you will receive and embrace it; hide it in your hearts; keep it as the apple of your eye; and resolve to live according to it. This is my errand here to-day, to treat with you concerning a place for the word of Christ in you. Shall I prevail? What say you? What answer shall I return to him that sent me? 2 Sam. xxiv. 13. Will you lift up your heads, "O ye gates? and the King of glory shall come in." Ps. xxiv. 7. Say, as David did, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine

eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

Hold fast the *doctrine* of the Gospel.—We know not how we may be tried. "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." Heb. xiii. 9. "Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness." 2 Pet. iii. 17. The way will be, to get a taste, a savour, a relish of the word, and to keep out of harm's way. Come not near those who are led away with the error of the wicked.

Hold fast the *worship* of the Gospel, and the *precepts* of the Gospel. Consider,

(1.) It is the word of Christ.—Therefore it comes from one that hath authority to command it, and power to avenge if ye refuse him that speaketh. See, then, that ye refuse not. "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

It comes from one that dearly loves you.—It is the word of a *Saviour*. It is a letter from your Friend, which he hath written with his own hand: and shall it have no place in you? "I have

written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing." If the Jews had occasion to carry a Bible any where, they were, by the tradition of the Elders, to carry it in their bosom. It is the word of Him that is gone to heaven to prepare a place for thee there: and wilt not thou give it a place in thy heart?

(2.) It is a word that will either save thee or damn thee, according as it hath or hath not a place in thee.—"We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other, the savour of life unto life."

If it *have* a place in you, it will save you. Rom. i. 16; James i. 21.

If it have *not* a place in you, it will damn you. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John xii. 48.

And doth not this concern us? Is any thing you can imagine of greater consequence to us? Behold, I set before you life and death. Here is a word that will save the life of thy soul, if it be received. Let the word of Christ have place in you, and it will not only tell you your duty, but it will enable you to do it. It is a word of strength.

(3.) If the word of Christ shall have a place in you, your prayers shall have a place with him: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." You shall command him, if his word shall command you. And is this nothing? Otherwise not: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination." If his word lies under your feet, your prayers shall lie under his feet. Consider,

(4.) If the word of Christ shall have no place in us, it will be just with God that it shall have no place among us. And that will be the issue of it after a while. Matt. xxi. 43; Rev. ii. 5. And what will become of us then?

Let me speak to you that are young especially. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." *Now* is the time for you to learn Christ, and to learn the form of wholesome words. Shortly, you will think yourselves past it. It is a great ground of our hope that God is not leaving us, because, in many places, there are young people looking towards heaven.

Let me speak to you that are masters of families. Let the word of Christ have place, not in your hearts only, but in your houses too. Do I need to exhort you to get Bibles into your houses? I suppose not. But you that have them, use

them. Do not think it enough that they have a place upon the shelf — let them have a place in your daily worship. Teach your children and servants. This would make ministers' work much more easy. You are to be *Prophets,* as well as Priests and Kings, in your own houses. You are to light lamps daily, as well as burn incense.

Once, again, let me speak to all. Let the word of Christ have place in yourselves, and pray heartily that it may have place in others also. "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified." Pray over this word this day, that it may have place here. Praying is like harrowing.

SERMON VI.

GALATIANS ii. 20.

And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.

ONE great excellency of the grace of faith is this — we are to live by it: nay, we cannot live well without it. This appears here from the example of the blessed apostle Paul, and elsewhere from the express assertions of Scripture. "The just shall live by his faith." Hab. ii. 4. Which words are often quoted in the New Testament, and there made Gospel. Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38.

There is a threefold life of a Christian in this world.

1. The life of justification.—Till our sins be pardoned, and our peace be made with God, we are dead men and women: dead in law, because under a sentence of death. But when the pardon comes, then we live. Now that is by faith:

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

2. The life of sanctification.—Till we are new creatures, we are dead in trespasses and sins. Grace quickens and makes us alive—alive to God, through Jesus Christ; being made partakers of his Spirit. Now the Spirit is received by faith: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal. iii. 2. Faith is wrought in us by the Spirit: and yet by faith it is that we receive the Spirit: "I send thee that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

3. The life of conversation—which is that the Apostle here speaks of: "The life we live in the flesh."—To live in the flesh hath two significations.

To live in the flesh is as much as to live in sin; to walk after the guidance and conduct of the fleshly mind. "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." It is not so taken here.

To live in the flesh is as much as to be here in the body; to be in this our tabernacle (2 Pet. i. 13), clothed with flesh. And so it is taken here. "The life we live in the flesh" is as much as our course and way of living in the world. This, Paul says, he lived by faith *now*. There is an emphasis in that now. I did not always live so: looking

backward, when I was a Pharisee, it was otherwise; but, now, since I was a Christian, called, converted, I live by faith.—*Now* I live by faith. I am looking forward: I shall not always live so: ere long, I shall see face to face, but now through a glass, darkly.

But why the "faith of the Son of God?" He does not mean the faith that was in Christ, inherent in him, as the subject of it; but the faith that is in Christ as the *object* of it, whereby we receive him, and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the Gospel.

We have faith here in all the three acts of it.

Here is the assenting act implied—assenting to the truth of what is said concerning him: that he is the Son of God; that he hath loved some, and given himself for some.

Here is the applying act—which is the appropriating of what is said in general to our own particular case: "Who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." And this is the main matter. The devils assent, but cannot apply.

Here are also answerable effects: and those are suitable fruits. I live by this faith: every thing I do, I do by it.

DOCTRINE. It is the excellency of the grace of faith, that a Christian hath his conversation by it here in this world. Or thus:

There is an excellent way of living while we are here in this world, and that is, living by faith.

This I apply especially to the employments of life, and to the enjoyments of life. Look how these are managed, and so our life may be said to be managed.

Our employments: in our particular calling. The right ordering of them is a great matter in our conversation.

Our enjoyments: in the use of lawful creature-comforts, eating, drinking, sleeping, converse with friends. In all these we should please God, and approve ourselves to him, as those that must give an account. "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God." Ps. l. 23. This faith will help us in, and it will not be done without it.

Shew, I. What faith doth towards the right ordering of the conversation.

1. It is by faith that we set the Lord always before us; and this is of great consequence. That God is present every where, and sees all, and knows all, is a truth assented to by every one: none denies it but he that says there is no God. But it is applied and improved by few. If it were,

it would not be with us as it is; if we believed God to be present with us, and always to see us. The words of the covenant are, "walk *before* me," Gen. xvii. 1: as if he had said, 'Live by faith: you do not, cannot see me with bodily eyes, but by an eye of faith you may. Believe I am where you are.'—What influence would this have upon all our callings, to make us diligent in them: for the Master sees! "Servants, obey your masters in all things: not with eye-service," that is, as to men. But I would it were with eye-service as to God. It would make us just, and true, and honest: we should not defraud and over-reach one another, because God sees it: though no one else knows any thing of it, he doth. *Cave, Deus videt—Beware, God sees you.*

What influence would this have upon us in the use of our creature-comforts; to keep the spirit serious; and to curb vanity and froth! "And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God." Exod. xviii. 12. It was an ordinary treat or meat, but they managed it as *before God.* This would work fear in feeding. See Jude 12.

2. It is by faith that we acknowledge God in all our ways. And this is another great thing in the right ordering of the conversation. "In

all thy ways acknowledge him." *In all thy ways*, that is, *in every action*. To acknowledge God is to knock at his door, to inquire what his mind and will is concerning it: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" in opposition to walking at all adventures. This is counted needless nicety, and more ado than needs; but faith says it must be so. Leave is light: he that runs of his own accord without warrant, may well look for disappointment. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus"—in his name, is by his authority. As in our affairs and business, so let this be done in our sports and recreations, in our society and company. Would we be willing that death should find us here? if not, God should not find us here. Such should be our habitual reflection. Is such or such a sport lawful? Nay, but are you *sure* it is? "He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely." If it be but doubtful, faith says it is better let it alone, for fear of a snare; "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." We should inquire, also, is it such a thing as I can ask his blessing for success? Can you say, "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it?" Ps. xc. 17. Phil. iv. 6. Without this, no good can be done.

"Acknowledge him in all thy ways;" that is, in the *event* of every action. Either things succeed well or otherwise. When they succeed well,

God is to be acknowledged with all thankfulness. As, if we thrive in our callings: "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." Deut. viii. 18. Ps. cxv. 1. When there is plenty at our tables: "Ye shall be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you." Joel ii. 26. When, on the other hand, we meet with losses, crosses, disappointments,—then God is to be acknowledged with silence, and submission *: we must kiss the rod, and be quiet under it. As Eli; "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." As David; "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it."

'But what brings the soul into this frame; what lifts it up in thankfulness for mercies, casts it down in humility and patience?' The grace of faith assenting to and applying what the Scripture says concerning the Divine providence. "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos iii. 6.

* "I remember," says the pious and excellent Rev. Jos. Caryl, "a woman, who had a child about eight or nine years of age. Once they were reduced to such a strait, that hunger began to pinch them sore: at length, the child, looking earnestly at the mother, said, 'Mother, do you think God will starve us?' 'No,' said the mother, 'I hope not.' 'But if he do,' added the child, 'yet *we must love and serve him still.*' Such language argued her to be more than a child in grace."—*Caryl on Job*, vol. I. p. 16. fol. edit.

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground [either for food, or by death] without your Father." Matt. x. 29. This acknowledging God in every thing, is the very sum-total of all religion. This is walking with God, having fellowship with him: and you see how needful faith is in this.

3. It is by faith that we are enabled to trust in God and cast our care upon him: even then when things look blackest upon us, and we know not what to do, to commit our way to him*. "He

* "The best of God's saints and servants are subject to fainting under afflictive providences; against which, believing is the best remedy. Especially believe, if you are Christians, the following things:—

"1. The righteousness of God.—He does you no wrong when he afflicts you. Did you believe that there is a great deal of evil in the least sin, you would not faint. Will you, who have deserved damnation, complain of an affliction?

"2. That all afflictions come from the will and counsel of God.—We must not look at second causes. Matt. x. 29.

"3. The truth and faithfulness of God.—Assure yourselves that not one tittle of his word shall fall to the ground; and he has said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'" Heb. xiii. 5.

"4. The almighty power of God.—He is able to do every thing; to supply our wants, to defend us from dangers, to deliver us out of troubles. It is an evidence that we doubt the power of God, when our hope and courage rise and fall according as means and second causes rise and fall.

"5. That the God with whom we have to do is great, and merciful, and tender towards us.—The word of God makes

shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." Ps. cxii. 7. "O our God, we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do." 2 Chron. xx. 12. Such a Scripture as Rom. viii. 28, affords plentiful matter for faith to work upon in the darkest dispensations: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." As Mr. Dod, hearing tidings of a great affliction befallen him, blessed God for the

this out as clear as with a sun-beam. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. We should therefore believe, that if God do not see fit to deliver us out o our troubles, he will support us under them, and bring good out of them.

"6. Our covenant-interest in and our-covenant relation to this God.—To believe his wisdom, power, and goodness, will do no good without this. Gen. xv. 1; Heb. xiii. 5.

"7. The records of the word concerning the people of God in all ages: how God dealt with them, and how they dealt with God, as to afflictive providences.—As to God's dealing with his people, we find that he has severely afflicted divers of them; that he has, notwithstanding, laid his everlasting arms underneath them to support them; that their afflictions have worked together for their good; and that usually he did deliver them out of their afflictions. As to their carriage towards God, it was submissive, patient, and quiet. James v. 11; Heb. xii. 1; Heb. xi.

"8. Looking unto Jesus.—*As* Jesus, a Saviour—as the Author and Finisher of faith—as enduring the cross and despising the shame—and as seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Look at him not only as a crucified, but as a glorified Christ." *Mr. Henry. Manuscript.*

good which he did believe should come to him out of it, though he knew not how or which way.

4. It is by faith that we take our aim right in what we do in the course of our conversation. And this is a main matter. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. x. 31. The glory of God is to be our chief and ultimate end, into which all other subordinate ends are to be resolved. We must eat and drink and sleep, and buy and sell, and sow and reap, that God may be glorified; that is, pleased in having his will done. Now this cannot be without faith. Heb. xi. 6. Faith is the eye of the soul looking at this invisible mark, and shooting towards it *.

* "Faith does great things in religion, especially strong faith. Luther mentions three great things that are done by it.

"1. To believe those things that seem impossible to natural reason; as the Creation of the world—the Incarnation of Christ.

"2. To wait upon God for mercies, though they be long in coming. Weak faith makes haste, but strong faith waits.

"3. To be able to cleave to God as a friend, even when he appears against me like an enemy. Job xiii. 15.

"Now to these three add three more great things in religion which will not be done without faith, strong faith.

"1. To forgive an offending brother seven times a day. This the Apostles were aware of.

"2. To be willing to part with a state in hand and possession, for another in hope and reversion. Heb. xi. 24, 25.

"3. To go on in the way of duty when we have no sensi-

5. It is by faith that we expect and receive strength and assistance in what we do.—There is absolute need of it, not only in spiritual, but also in natural and civil actions. Acts xvii. 27, 28. Now faith is a grace that doth cast self down, self conceit, wisdom, will, and power; and the lower self is cast, the more God is advanced.

6. By faith we are enabled to look unto Jesus: to his life, as our pattern. How did he live in the world? As one *in*, not *of* it: he went about doing good. It is by faith that we believe the acceptance of what we do in Christ Jesus, through his meritorious righteousness. An ordinary action done in faith, is pleasing to God through Christ. Luther instances in sweeping the house, or milking the kine, as having more true worth in them, when done aright, than all the brave exploits of the great men of the world in conquering nations and kingdoms, when they do it from other principles — as, to gain applause, and make their names great. "We walk by faith," not by sight, said the Apostle: "wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of God."—Oh how comfortable is this, when we come to lie down at night!—to be thinking, This day I have been *serving God* in the duties of my par-

ble encouragement in it. To do our duty, though God hide his face, and we have not the comfort of our duty."

Mr. Henry. Manuscript.

ticular calling — perhaps mean, but my *calling* — and I believe God hath therein accepted me, in and through Christ the Mediator.

7. Faith helps in the redeeming of time.—It sees it going — that sense doth. It sees also eternity coming — that sense doth not. The primitive saints "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Shew, II. What kind of life this life of faith is. It hath these properties:—

1. It is a rare and singular way of living. A way that very few are acquainted with. "The *just* shall live by his faith:" and these are far the lesser number.

2. It is a real, solid, substantial way of living. It is no dream or fancy, but a certain truth. To live by faith, is to live indeed. They are dead, and not alive, that want faith to live by. 1 Tim. v. 6.

3. It is a noble, a sublime, way of living. It is as much above the merely rational life, as that is above the brutish and sensual. "The way of life is above to the wise." Prov. xv. 24. 1 Cor. iii. 3.

4. It is a sweet and comfortable way of living.

It brings joy and peace along with it into the soul, such as the world can neither give nor take away. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

5. It is a safe and secure way of living. It sets a man out of the reach of danger. He that lives by faith, hath his conversation in heaven; and where can he be safer? "Kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." Kept, as in a garrison. When is the bird in danger of snares, nets, lime-twigs? Not when flying aloft, but when upon the ground. Such is the believer's case. It is when he is earthly-minded, and his faith is weak, that he is in danger of temptation, and sin.

Use 1. You that are strangers to this life, acquaint yourselves with it. Believe there is such a thing; and then say, If it be so, why am I thus? The common principles of living are sight and sense, sin and self, the course and custom of the world, the carnal appetite, fleshly wisdom, our own imaginations and inclinations. Think what poor, base, sordid ways of living these are! How much below a man! A heathen could say, *Major sum, et ad majora natus, quàm ut sim mancipium corporis.—I am greater,*

and born to greater things, than to be a slave to my body. Seneca*. Those who live by sense are likely to have the things of sense for their portion—a poor, pitiful portion!

2. You that know it, and are acquainted with it, see that you abound in it more and more. There is no life like it, and that you will say when you come to die. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. 2 Kings xx. 3. 2 Cor. i. 12. Consider: it is but for a while—ere long we shall take our leave of this kind of living; when faith shall be turned into vision, hope into fruition, prayer into praise, and God alone shall be all in all.

* Lucius Annæus Seneca, the celebrated philosopher, was born about six years before Christ. He was preceptor to Nero, and perished by his orders, April 12, A. D. 65, æt. 53.—*Aikin's General Biog.* vol. IX. p. 101.

SERMON VII.

LUKE xi. 1.

And it came to pass, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

IN these words we have three great patterns, or examples, set before us for our imitation.

1. Here is a pattern for praying—and that is our Lord Jesus Christ, the Pattern of patterns; who, it is said, *was praying in a certain place.*

2. Here is a pattern for desiring to be taught how to pray—and that was, *one of his disciples, who said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray.*

3. Here is a pattern for teaching those that are under our charge, as well as we can, how to pray—and that was, John the Baptist: *as John also taught his disciples.*

For the 1st. — There are many things wherein our blessed Lord Jesus hath set before us a copy,

that we might write after it—*leaving us an example*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. And among the rest, one is the great duty of prayer. Both as to the duty itself; and as to the manner of performing it—for frequency, for fervency. As God, he is prayed to; as Man, he prayed. Here it is said, *he was praying in a certain place*. Whether alone, or his disciples with him, doth not appear. It might be the one, it might be the other. If alone, then we have him here, as elsewhere, an example of *secret* prayer, and it should move us to go and do likewise. It is impossible the soul should thrive in the neglect of secret prayer.

If his disciples were with him, as, for ought I know, they might be (for as soon as he had done, one of them spoke to him; therefore, it is likely, present with him in the duty; why not?), then it is an instance of *family* prayer, for his disciples were his family. If so, those of you that have the charge of families learn from hence, if you will do as Christ did, you must pray with your families. Those that live in the neglect of that duty, do not tread in the steps of their Lord and Master, whose name they bear.

It was *in a certain place*. He doth not say what place — whether in the house, or in the field, or by the shore side. No place is amiss for prayer. As we have opportunity, 1 Tim. ii. 8. Though our Lord Jesus had not where to lay his

head to rest, yet, it seems, he had where to bow his knees to pray.

For the 2d.—*When he ceased.* Whether he were alone, or his disciples with him, it had not been fit for them to have interrupted him till he had made an end. We must take heed how we do willingly and wilfully disturb any one in the worship of God. The mother and brother of our Lord Jesus interrupted him in preaching, and had a rebuke for it.

One of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray. He doth not say which, by name, but some one of them, in the stead, and it may be by the appointment, of the rest, and with their consent. Lord, teach *us* to pray—not me, but *us*, including all.

To pray. q. d. Lord, thou hast taught us many good lessons; teach us one more, and that is, to pray. 'But had not he,' it might be objected, 'taught them that before? "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are," &c. Matt. vi. 5, &c.' I answer, Yes: both as to matter—when ye pray, pray *Our Father*, &c.; and as to manner also—secretly: *Enter into thy closet and shut the door.* Without vain ostentation: not in the corners of the streets, as the Pharisees, ver. 5, 6. Without vain repetition, ver. 7. But either this had been forgotten by

them, or else they expected some further and fuller instructions and directions about prayer. And that is the meaning of *Lord, teach us to pray.* Praying is a lesson that we have need to be learning all the days of our lives.

For the 3d. "*As John also taught his disciples.*"—How that was doth not appear by any records of Scripture, and therefore it is vain and needless to make conjectures. But teach them he did how to pray, whether by making forms of prayer for them, or by giving them rules concerning matter and method only to be used in praying, we know not certainly: the latter as likely as the former. However, as he did so, they would have their Master to do; and he did it far better: "And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," &c. ver. 2, &c. of which afterwards, if God permit.

From the disciples' petition or request here, "Lord, teach us to pray," we learn this

DOCTRINE. It is a very desirable thing for all the disciples of the Lord Jesus to be taught to pray.

From what hath been said already, you under-

stand that prayer is the subject we are next falling upon. The word and prayer are every day's concerns: not Sabbath-day's only, but *every* day's: and if, after you have been learning how to hear, you will but next learn how to pray, I doubt not but, by the grace of God, both you and I shall have cause to rejoice together.

The Sacraments should have been between, according to the method of the Catechism; but having spoken something to them before, under the Second Commandment, and for other reasons, at present I waive them to treat of prayer. And I beseech you now, as formerly—again and again I beseech you—to take heed how ye hear. As prayer is a friend to hearing the word—we must pray before, in, and after hearing — so hearing the word is a friend to prayer. The word well heard, will be a means of teaching you how to pray.

Query 1. Who are to be reckoned the disciples of the Lord Jesus?

Answer 1. Some are so in profession only.

2. Some are so in power and profession too.

All we that are here in this place this day, are the disciples of the Lord Jesus in profession. Are we not? If not, what do we here? Is it not God

in Christ that we are worshipping? Is it not his word that we are hearing; his day that we are sanctifying—the Lord's day, the Lord Christ's day? Was it not his name that we were baptized into? And are we not called Christians from Christ? Oh, but look to it, that, besides the name, we have the *thing;* besides the profession, we have the *power*. Else what will the name signify? Will the profession save us? No: it will not: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Now they that are the disciples of Christ in power—that is, in deed and in truth—are such as are really devoted to his will and service; as have taken his yoke upon them, have resigned up themselves to him, and are inwardly and heartily what they seem to be outwardly and professedly. Both the one and the other have need to learn how to pray; even those that do pray, how to pray better.

Query 2. What is it to pray?

Answer. Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God.

Therein lies the essence of prayer. There are other things that are the adjuncts and appurtenances

of prayer, but the essence of it lies in the offering up of our desires to God.

1. To say a prayer, if we say it *only*, is not to pray. Prayer is not lip-labour, but heart-labour. It is soul-work, see Matt. xv. 7, 8, &c. "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also." 1 Cor. xiv. 15. —In this the Papists miss it. They are taught to babble over so many Pater-nosters, and that in Latin, a language they do not understand. No matter, say they, God understands it. And that is praying! No: praying is desiring, and offering up those desires with knowledge and affection. Else a parrot may be taught to pray, if prayer consisted in word and tongue only.—In this, too, many Protestants miss it. Though they pray in English, yet they understand, they heed, no more, than if it were in Latin. Certainly prayer is another thing from what it is commonly taken to be.

2. To be present where praying is, is not praying, if we be present *only*. Though an angel were the minister, or the master of the family, yet, unless we join inwardly in heart and soul when he prays, it will not be reckoned to us. In this also the Papists are grievously deluded; for when the priest is saying Mass—that is, praying—though they hear not nor know what he says, yet if they be present it is enough: and for proof of this

they allege Luke i. 9, 10; "According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord: And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense." Whereas, mark! it is said they were praying without: not only standing, or sitting, or kneeling, but *praying* there. His offering of incense within was not praying, though typical of praying, especially of Christ's making intercession within the vail. Even Christ's intercession in heaven avails not us, except we also be praying on earth.

If being present where prayer is, without putting our shoulders to it, were praying, the seats we sit on may be said to pray, for they are present in place—so the dogs under the table—nay, the devils themselves, for they also are present: see Job i. And therefore look to this, though you are where good prayers are made, unless you make them yours by hearty concurrence, you do not pray.

But, (1.) In praying there must be desiring.—Desires are the soul of prayer. Now there is such or such a thing—suppose pardon of sin, grace and strength to do the will of God, eternal life and salvation; or suppose some temporal mercy, health, success in some affair, God's blessing upon it to make it to prosper—First, I see my need of it; next, I see it desirable, that is, worth looking after; next, I desire it, saying, O that I had it!

There is so much towards praying. But this alone is not it. There must be desire, else no praying: there may be desire, and yet no praying. Wishing is not praying, as in the case of Balaam.

(2.) Those desires must be offered up, that is, presented before the Lord, tendered to him, requested of him. This may be done two ways.

Either mentally—by the language of the heart, when the thoughts are working towards God, and speaking to him, which he understands. As Hannah: "She spake in her heart: only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." As Nehemiah: "Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? so I prayed to the God of heaven."

Or vocally—by the voice, the language of the lips, when our desires are clothed with words. "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips."

Query 3. What is it to be taught to pray?

Teachings are two-fold.

1. Outward. — So man teaches by word of mouth. So books teach by rules and directions laid down in writing. So examples teach. So John taught his disciples to pray.

2. Inward. — So God teaches, by his Spirit and grace inclining us to the duty, enabling us for the duty. He works desires in us; he helps to offer up those desires.

This he promises to do: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." Zech. xii. 10. This he hath performed accordingly: "Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 26. See also Gal. iv. 6.

Without him we can do nothing. This the disciples knew, and therefore they make address to the Lord Jesus: "Lord, teach us to pray." They do not petition their fellow-disciples, Peter, James, John.

And it is observable in his answer, when he had taught them outwardly, by a rule shewing the matter and method of prayer, he directs them to pray for the Spirit, as for a principle within; and gives encouragement to their faith and hope, that, if they did so, they should certainly speed: "Ask, and it shall be given you." ver. 9. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall

your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." ver. 13. Ask, as if he had said, the Spirit to help you to ask other things.

He that will learn to pray, must pray. Offer up desires to God for a praying heart, for praying gifts, and praying graces, and praying abilities. Pray that ye may pray. And if our hearts be upright herein, we shall be heard. I know, other means and helps outwardly of other kinds are to be used, but all will not do without this. We may shew you the way of praying, but it is the Spirit that leads and guides in that way: "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms," (Hos. xi. 3)—as the nurse the child. Hence the phrase of walking after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1.

Query 4. How is it proved to be a thing desirable? Convince us of that, and we will quickly desire it. It may be, it is a lesson not worth the learning, a thing not worth the asking.

The contrary will most evidently appear if you will think seriously of it.

1. To pray is our duty.—Not a thing only that may be done if we will, but that *must* be done. We sin greatly if we do not pray. This appears

(1.) From Scripture-commands.—That which

makes duty, is the Divine command; and the more express and clear that command is, the more expressly and clearly the thing commanded is our duty; and the more earnest, and urgent, and frequent, a command is, and the more it is backed and seconded with promises and threatenings, still the more we are to look upon the thing so commanded as our duty.

Now it were easy to make instances in a multitude, of such commands concerning prayer; express commands, urgent commands; in the Old Testament, in the New Testament: so that it is a wonder how any Christian, so called, that owns the Scriptures to be the word of God, dares to live in disobedience to such commands. Dost thou know that the word of God requires thee to pray *always;* to pray without ceasing? And yet to this day thou hast never prayed! thou art yet to begin to pray! Think what that Scripture says to thee: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

To pray, is a part of natural religion. The command about it—at least the work or effect of it—remains written, after a sort, not totally obliterated in the hearts of all men. See Rom. ii. 14. As far as they know there is a God, so far they know that God is to be prayed to. When the mariners were afraid, they cried every man unto his god. When Jonah was "fast asleep, the ship-master

came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Rise, call upon thy God." See Jonah i. From thence I gather, that not praying is a sin against nature, an omission against natural light, and therefore to be reckoned among the worst of sins. As unnatural uncleannesses are the worst kinds of uncleannesses, so unnatural omissions, let me so call them, are the worst kinds of omissions. Be awakened by this, I beseech you, those of you that live without prayer.

(2.) From Scripture-characters.—It is usual in the word of God to describe persons by this, whether good or bad. If they were good: Oh, such a man—he was a praying man, he called upon God. "And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus; for, *behold, he prayeth.*" Acts ix. 11. If they were bad: Oh, such a man—he lived without prayer, and that is a sign he was without grace. He did not call upon God: then no good was to be expected from him. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God." Ps. xiv. 2. And in the 4th verse we are informed, they "call not upon the Lord."

Now, should not this move us by all means to learn to pray, because praying is such a duty that, if we live in the neglect of it, we are certainly

wicked, ungodly people? Without prayer in the world, without God in the world. Oh! then do not sleep in a prayerless condition.

But, further: As to pray is our duty, and therefore we have reason to desire teaching about it; so to pray in a *right manner* is our duty, and therefore we have reason to be taught this also. Many pray that do not pray with acceptation, because they ask amiss, James iv. 3. This was the case with the Pharisees, see Matt. vi.; and particularly with that Pharisee whose conduct is recorded in Luke xviii. As, in other things, it is not enough to do that which is good unless we do it well—"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door," Gen. iv. 7—so it is in praying.

O what need have we then to pray for Divine teachings! Lord, teach me not only to pray, but to pray well. And when we have prayed never so well, we have need to pray that we may pray better.

Till the Lord be pleased to teach us, we never know to purpose what those requisites are that must be found in an acceptable prayer. And when we do know what they are, we are never the nearer till he work them in us. Therefore beg daily, as the disciples here, "Lord, teach us to pray."

2. To pray is our dignity.—As it is duty, and

we must pray, so it is privilege that we may pray. If in any act of obedience there is a reward of obeying in obeying, according to Psalm xix. 11, certainly it is so in prayer. If in any thing the fish come up with money in the mouth of it, it is so in this. It is its own reward *.

* Dr. Doddridge, whose indefatigable labours and eminent piety will be had in everlasting remembrance, addressing a friend, made the following striking remark: "My weight of business does, in some measure, rob me of the greatest treasure I have in the world,—I mean the hours I would wish to spend in secret devotion; without which there is no sweetness, no calm and serenity of mind, and therefore very little capacity for managing business: for so it is, though it may seem a riddle, that when I pray and meditate most, I work most."—See *Dr. Doddridge's Works, Dr. Williams* and *Mr Parsons'* edition, vol. I. p. 164.

Nor is this a solitary proof in support of Mr. Henry's assertion: it is corroborated by the experience of every Christian. In some cases, *habitual* prayer has been followed by events truly remarkable. One of these is recorded in the Nonconformists' Memorial, vol. III. p. 363; and the reader will, it is believed, consider no apology necessary for introducing it here. Not long after the year 1662, Mr. Grove, a gentleman of great opulence, whose seat was near Birdbush, in Wiltshire, upon his wife's lying dangerously ill, sent to the parish minister to pray with her. On account of his non-compliance with the request, Mr. G. expressed his displeasure, which emboldened one of the servants to say, "Sir, our shepherd, if you will send for him, can pray very well: we have often heard him at prayer in the field." Upon this he was immediately sent for; and Mr. Grove asking him whether he ever did or could pray, the shepherd, fixing his eyes upon him with pe-

(1.) There is honour in it. It puts a real honour upon him that uses it aright.—If any thing will make a man's face to shine, it is being in the mount with God in prayer. To pray, is to have access into the presence-chamber of the King of heaven, and there to be admitted to hold discourse and parley with him; to speak to him as a man speaks to his friend. O what an honour is this! for a poor creature, that is but dust and ashes, to be advanced into such communion with the Lord of glory! I am sure Abraham thought it so. Gen. xviii. 23, &c. David thought it so:

culiar seriousness in his countenance, replied, "God forbid, sir, I should live *one day without prayer*." He was then desired to pray with the sick lady; which he did so pertinently to her case, with such fluency and fervency of devotion, as greatly to astonish the husband, and all the family who were present. When they arose from their knees, the gentleman addressed him to this effect: "Your language and manner discover you to be a very different person from what your present appearance indicates. I conjure you to inform me who and what you are, and what were your views and situation in life before you came into my service." Upon which he told him, that he was one of the ministers (the Rev. Peter Ince, of Dunhead, in Wiltshire) who had been lately ejected from the church; and that having nothing of his own left, he was content for a livelihood to submit to the honest and peaceful employment of tending sheep. On hearing this, Mr. G. said to him, "Then you shall be *my* shepherd;" and immediately erected a meeting-house on his own estate, in which Mr. Ince gathered a congregation of Dissenters, which continues to subsist to this day.

"Is this the manner of men, O Lord God?" 2 Sam. vii. 19.

(2.) There is comfort in it, unspeakable comfort.—Many a soul hath found it so many a time. Prayer is heart's ease. When the spirits have been overwhelmed with fear, with sorrow; going alone, and praying awhile, hath strangely dispelled and scattered those clouds. See the case of Hannah, 1 Sam. i. The way to "rejoice evermore," is to "pray without ceasing." 1 Thess. v. 16, 17.

(3.) There is profit in it. It is a gainful duty.—The hypocrite, indeed, thinks it not so, and therefore hath mean thoughts of it. "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" But the true Christian will acknowledge it.

It is profitable to others—even to as many as God shall incline our hearts to pray for, be they good or bad, friends or foes, persons, or towns, or nations. Each of these have been the better for prayer. I believe this nation at this day is kept from sinking by means of prayer, as Israel by the prayer of Moses. Exod. xxxii. 10.

It is profitable to ourselves.—What the Apostle says of godliness, is true of prayer; it "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." I have heard of one that desired no more to make

him rich, than to have the liberty of half an hour's talk with the king every day. Besides the honour of it, he thought it would enrich him, for every one would be bribing him to speak for them. O what advantage then will it be, to have free access, as often as we will, into the presence of the King of kings, and leave to stay there as long as we will and to ask what we will!

Prayer is the key to all the cabinets of heaven, to unlock and open them. Prayer is the midwife to all the promises—helps to bring them forth: "And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." Isa. xxxvii. 3. That which was wanting was prayer.

Now, if this be so, then certainly it is worth while to learn to pray. There is good reason we should every one of us say, "Lord, teach *me* to pray."

3. I have said nothing yet of one great excellency of prayer, and that is, that it is the delight of God.—It is hard to imagine it should be so; for what is there in it that should render it so? and yet "the prayer of the upright is his delight:" it is incense in his nostrils: it is music in his ears: it hath such a strange power over

him, to speak with reverence, that he can deny it nothing *.

Now this also is a good reason why we should desire to be taught to pray, even for God's sake, and we may plead it accordingly. Lord, I would fain get the art of pleasing thee; I would learn to do that wherein thou mayest be delighted: therefore, Lord, teach me to pray, for I have heard that prayer is thy delight.

* A memorable illustration of this remark is preserved for admiration and encouragement in Exodus xxxii. When the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the Israelites for their idolatrous worship of the golden calf, he is represented as hastening to their destruction; and that no obstacle might arise from the intercession of Moses, the Almighty thus speaks: "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." But "Moses besought the Lord;" and the sequel shews the power, (may not the term be applied?) the *omnipotence* of prayer: "The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."

With this in view, Luther's language can hardly be considered too energetic. "Exiguus gemitus in auribus Dei fortissimus est clamor; et ita cœlum et terram replet, ut præter eum Deus nihil audiat, at compescit omnes omnium aliarum rerum clamores"—*A feeble groan is in the ears of God a mighty noise; and so fills heaven and earth that he can hear nothing besides. He stills all other clamours to listen to it.*—Luther. Op. *tom. IV.*

> "Satan trembles, when he sees
> The weakest saint upon his knees."—*Cowper.*

There is another argument, namely, That we cannot pray as we should, further than we are taught. Therefore there is a necessity we should beg this teaching. There are also many promises that God will teach us, for our encouragement: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord." Isa. liv. 13. "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Jer. xxxi. 34.

Use. Shall I prevail with each of you to make this one errand to the Throne of Grace, again and again, between this and the next Sabbath? Lord, teach me to pray—Lord, teach my children to pray. Give us this new-year's gift.

SERMON VIII.

LUKE xxii. 44.

Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly.

AGONY signifies struggle, or conflict. Two things especially our Lord Jesus at this time in the garden had a sore conflict with, the night before he died—grief and fear.

1. With grief.—He said his soul was "exceeding sorrowful." Mark xiv. 34. Περίλυπός: *surrounded with sorrow on every side.* He sorrowed for sin. Not his own, for he had none to sorrow for: it was for your sin and mine. Our guilt was his grief. The burden laid upon him, which was the iniquity of us all, made him sweat as he did. "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

He sorrowed for the misery and ruin likely to fall upon all impenitent sinners; particularly upon the nation and people of the Jews, who were his kinsmen according to the flesh. He wept for *them,* Luke xix.; and here he was in an *agony* for them.

He sorrowed for the dispersion of his disciples. He, the Shepherd, being smitten, they, the poor sheep, were to be sadly scattered abroad. He saw it, and it grieved him, because he loved them.

2. With fear.—It is said he was "sore afraid." Of what? Why, of the bitter cup approaching. He was afraid of dying—especially of dying upon the cross—especially dying upon the cross a *propitiatory sacrifice* for the sins of the world; dying under the evidences of his Father's displeasure; dying to make atonement. This he foresaw at hand, even at the door, and had an amazing apprehension of it, and struggled under it, insomuch that it put him into an agony. Now from this agony of our Lord, we learn,

I. That there is more evil in sin than most people are aware of.

He that would know what sin is, let him behold Christ sweating in the garden; and then he may see, as in a glass, that it is not a thing to be made light of. He could bear as much as another, surely. He bears up heaven and earth, and all that is therein, and never shrinks at it: All the weight thereof never occasioned him one drop of *sweat:* but when sin came to be charged upon him, then he shrunk with a witness. O that this might be our inference from it! Then, by God's grace, we shall take

heed how we ever make a mock of sin. Sin is an edge-tool, and it is ill jesting with it. "*Fools* make a mock at sin." "As a madman, who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?" Shall that make us merry, that made Christ sad—make us laugh, that made him sweat?

II. That though God's justice were not satisfied by it, yet it was part of the satisfaction.

The agony of Christ in the garden was part of the atonement made for sin. I say *part* of the atonement; for, to speak properly, that which atoned was death. If he had been in agonies every day of his life, those would not have taken away sin: it must be dying: dying must do that, and therefore he did die. But his agony was the beginning of his dying. The garden was the valley of the shadow of death to him. And it is our duty to reckon it so, and to be comforted in it that Divine Justice is by Him satisfied in all his demands, and that therefore now there is no condemnation. Rom. viii. 1.

III. That it is our duty to prepare for agonies, that is, sharp conflicts with grief and fear.

These we shall have, sometimes on one account, sometimes on another. There are few of us but have had them already more or less; but we must expect

more, and provide accordingly. "Let not him that putteth on the harness rejoice as him that puts it of." We are in the world as in a wilderness; compassed about with wants, dangers, and enemies; and it will be so till we come to heaven. Well, but in every agony remember two things.

1. That Jesus Christ was in one before you. A sharper one, I dare say, than any of yours can possibly be. Therefore "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that may try you, as though some strange thing happened."

2. That his being in one before you, took the sting out of yours. The sting of an agony is sin. Is sin pardoned? Is thy peace made with God in the blood of Christ? Be of good cheer, it cannot hurt thee.

IV. We learn how to carry it under an agony that we may please God, and come off with honour.

Carry it as Christ carried it. He prayed. He submitted. And so must we*; and whoever doth

* "Whensoever we see *any* black or dark hour, any bitter or bloody cup *coming* toward us, it is our duty to pray, and we sin if we do not. The Lord himself expressly requires it of us, Ps. l. 15; James v. 13. He graciously promises to accept of us therein, 2 Chron. vii. 13—15. He wonders if we do not, Isa. lix. 16. He chides severely for the neglect, Isa. xxxi. 1. He hath given encouraging examples of his acceptance, Exod. xiv; Acts xii. There is

so aright, and as he ought, shall certainly have a comfortable issue, as he had.

1. He prayed—nay, he prayed *earnestly*—he prayed *more* earnestly.

Prayer is a salve for every sore. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray," let the affliction be what it will. Prayer is heart's ease. No man is miserable, whatever his condition be, but he that hath a hard heart and cannot pray (Mr. Dod). Prayer hath a *probatum est* written upon it from the experience of all the saints in all ages. In agonies, there is no cordial like it. "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." See an instance in Jacob, Gen. xxxii.; Hannah, 1 Sam. i.; Jehoshaphat upon a public occasion, 2 Chron. xx. 2, 3, 17. If a book were written of all the cures that prayer hath done—I mean, that God hath done

good reason why we should pray; for the affliction is of God's sending, whatever it be; Amos iii. 6; and by praying to him, we acknowledge this. Besides, God, and none else, can remove the trouble, Job xxxiv. 29; Jer. xlvii. 6, 7; Deut. xxxii. 39; Ps. lvii. 2.

"Our prayers must be in humility, 2 Chron. vii. 14. In hope and confidence, Heb. iv. 16. Fervent, as Jacob, Gen. xxxii. See James v. 15, 16. Frequent, Gen. xxxii. 26; Isa. lxii. 1; Isa. xxvi. 16." *Mr. Henry. Manuscript.*

by means of prayer—it would be the largest book that ever was seen. How, then, should this endear prayer to us; increase our value and esteem of it; and engage us, upon all occasions, to the use and practice of it! What good will a receipt do if we don't use it? Try it. Try it the next time any thing is amiss with you, either from grief under some evil present, or from fear under some evil future. Try what prayer will do. Away to the Throne of Grace. It is erected on purpose. There spread thy case and condition before the Lord; tell him how it is with you: implore his help, his seasonable help. Take with you words, the Master's words: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me—if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." Notice this prayer, and the circumstances of it.

(1.) In the prayer observe the title he gives to God—"Father." An endearing compellation! The same *we* may use in prayer, in all our agonies. This may be done to move him to do to us as a father: Doubtless thou art our father, full of bowels. Jer. iii. 4, 5. It may be done, also, to move ourselves to hope and trust in him as children, even then when he seems to hide his face from us. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace*."

* "Look upon it, if you are the children of God, as

(2.) In this prayer observe the thing he asks: "Let this cup pass from me;"—"Take away

your *duty* to come with boldness in prayer. We are commanded to come *boldly*. The contrary is your fault and failing.

"Look upon boldness in prayer as that which pleases God, and the contrary as that which displeases him. Jer. xxxi. 18, 20. "And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt call me no more Baali." Hos. ii. 16. Not Baali, my *Lord;* but Ishi, my *Husband.* By this name he will be known; a name of love and sweetness.

"Beware of those things which hinder boldness in prayer; as *guilt—strangeness*—and *unbelief*, doubting.

"View often the encouragements for prayer: as, The near and dear relations wherein he hath put himself, especially that of a father. Ps. ciii. 13. It may be thou art thyself a father. See Matt. vii. 9, &c.;—The exceeding great and precious promises. John xvi. 23, &c.;—The encouraging parables. Luke xi. 5, &c.; Luke xviii. 1, 2;—Or, especially; The encouraging experiences you have had—your own and others. We miss it, that we do not lay up in store signal answers to prayer: it would help much. And above all, he hath provided for us a Mediator: his own Son, as God; bone of our bone, as man. Heb. iv. 15, 16.

"Mix holy fear with your boldness, in all your addresses. Ps. ii. 11; Ps. v. 7. There is reason for both—Boldness, because God is our Father; fear, because our Father is in heaven—boldness, because of Christ's worthiness; and fear, because of our unworthiness—boldness, because of God's goodness and mercy; fear, because of his greatness and majesty. Heb. xii. 28. Not a fear of diffidence and distrust; not slavish nor childish, without knowing why—but childlike; a reverent awe producing suitable behaviour of body and soul. Eccl. v. 1.

"See the Spirit's influence upon our boldness in prayer.

this cup;"—That the hour might pass. Mark xiv. 35, 36.

'What is meant by this *cup*, this *hour?*' His whole passion approaching, particularly this present agony. It is so called, not in an aggravating, but in an extenuating way—an hour, not a day, week, month, year, age—a cup, not a river, sea. Being but a cup, there is hope of quickly being at the bottom of it, though it be a bitter cup. This teaches us not to make the worst, but the *best*, of afflicting providences. The worst of our sins, but light afflictions. This will be so, "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal."

It is the effect of his witnessing act. Rom. viii. 15, 16. Therefore hear and receive the Spirit's testimony. By a convincing act, bringing the soul to a sight and sense of want, he makes us in good earnest—as beggars.

"Because examples teach more powerfully than rules, let me set before you a Pattern of prayer—a Copy without a blot. It is that of Christ himself. He prayed frequently: late and early, Mark i. 35. He prayed fervently, Luke xxii. 41, 44; Heb. v. 7. He prayed to God as to a Father; Matt. xi. 25, 26; John xvii.—yet as to a holy, righteous Father. He prayed with submission, Matt. xxvi. 42. He was of a public spirit in prayer. John xvii. 20. He was of a charitable spirit in prayer, Luke xxiii. 34. He prayed with thanksgiving—for particular returns of prayer, John xi. 41. We thrust thanksgiving into a corner, if not *wholly* omit it."

Mr. Henry. Manuscript.

'What is meant by removing this cup, taking, passing it away?' Either that it might not come at all, or that he might have a quick dispatch—'Was he then willing to be excused; did he shrink in the preparation?' No: but it shews us that he had all the sinless infirmities of human nature, and fear of death and dissolution among the rest. Therefore he presently adds, "Not my will, but thine be done." If it may consist with thy honour, and man's redemption, let it pass.

(3.) This is the third thing we have in this prayer, the terms on which he asks: "*If thou be willing*, remove this cup from me." This we must say in all our addresses to the Throne of Grace for temporal escapes—"If thou be willing." The will of God must rule us always in every thing. The will of his precept in our doings; the will of his providence in our sufferings.

Now the circumstances of this prayer are observable, besides the prayer itself.

It was private.—"He went forward a little"—where he might be out of hearing—he withdrew himself, according to his own rule; "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet." It is said of David, "he went in and sat before the Lord." 2 Sam. vii. 18. We each of us ought, both on ordinary and extraordinary occasions, to retire ourselves for prayer. "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me hear thy voice." Sol. Song ii. 14.

Observe his posture.—According to Matt. xxvi. 39, "he fell on his face"—prostrate. O what a sight was here, to see the blessed Jesus lying on the bare earth and praying! See what his love to us brought him to! In prayer we should be always reverent and self-abasing: as the Publican: he "would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven."

'But Luke says, he "*kneeled*" down, chap. xli.' Both might say true. He might have been one while upon his face, another while upon his knees, as is usual in agonies.

Mark the repetition.—When he had prayed this prayer once, he went again, after some intermission, and prayed a second time; and after that, a third time. Matt. xxvi. This is brought by some to prove the lawfulness, nay, the expediency, of forms of prayer; not only in public, but also in secret: that we may lawfully use the same words, nay, that it is *best* to do it.

'Who says we may not?' We do not say you may not. But I must tell you, they are not the same words, but, τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον, *the same argument, errand.* The words might be different, and so they are. Besides, who says it is not *lawful?* the thing that we plead against is the *imposing* of forms, especially to the express exclusion of other prayer as babbling, canting.

That which I should rather gather from this re-

ception is, that we may—nay, that we ought—to persevere in prayer. If the first time bring not an answer, we must go again. Eph. vi. 13; Luke xviii. 1; Isa. lxii. 1. Pray without ceasing. As Paul—he "besought the Lord thrice." It was in an agony of temptation. And if at last, even after the seventh time, we can but see a cloud, though no bigger than a man's hand, rising, it will be worth while. See 1 Kings xviii. 44. Prayer is like the dove that Noah sent forth: it returned the first time with no hope, the second time with an olive branch. We lose many a prayer by fainting in it, and giving it over. Jacob wrestled perseveringly: "And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh; and he said, *I will not* let thee go, except thou bless me."

2. Jesus prayed earnestly.

His earnestness in prayer shews the deep sense he had of the evil he prayed against, and the eager desire he had to be delivered from it. "He offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears." It was no dull prayer: he prayed with all his might. It was no dry prayer: he wept and prayed, and prayed and wept. This teaches us to do in like manner, especially in our agonies. Even nature causes vehemency at such a time: "They *poured out* a prayer when thy chastening was upon them." Isa. xxvi. 16. But the importunity of grace is another thing. The

Scriptures use sundry comparisons and sundry expressions, to set forth the holy earnestness of the saints in prayer. As,

Pouring out the *heart:* that is more than pouring out a prayer. "Pour out your heart before him." Ps. lxii. 8. "I have poured out my soul before the Lord." 1 Sam. i. 15. It supposes the heart melted—melting affections, melting expressions.

Lifting up the heart. "Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens." Lam. iii. 41. "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul." Ps. xxv. 1. In opposition to letting down, in dejection and despondency.

Stretching forth the heart. Fervency of spirit, Rom. xii. 11. Wrestling, Gen. xxxii. 24; Isa. lxiv. 7. Striving: "Stivre together with me in your prayers to God," Rom. xv. 30. Labouring fervently: "Always labouring fervently for you in prayers," Col. iv. 12. Praying exceedingly, 1 Thess. iii. 10—super-excessively.

This way of praying is the likeliest way to speed. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The contrary fails. Cold desires beg denials. One reason why God withholds the blessing is to draw out importunity.

The earnestness must be as the kind of mercy is: we may be too importunate in temporal things.

3. He prayed *more* earnestly—Ἐκτενέστερον, with more *stretching out*—more than at other times.

This was the case in respect of intenseness of affection. There is a dispute between Dr. Hammond and Mr. Jeang, how that could be, that Christ should be more earnest in one prayer than in another, seeing he was always alike full of habitual grace.

This may be so in respect of enlargedness of expression. He prayed longer then than at other times: therefore the first words mentioned were not all that he spoke in prayer; only the sum and substance: he prayed more at large. So may we in our agonies, as there may be occasion: and, blessed be God, he to whom we pray is one whose ear is not, *cannot* be, heavy with hearing. Isa. lix. 1.

He submitted as well as prayed. "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." 'Though I am thus earnest in this matter, weeping and crying—though I would fain be heard that the cup might pass—yet, Father, it is with submission I pray; it shall be as thou pleasest: if thou wilt have me drink of it, I will, even if it were more bitter than it is.' Note: when we pray for the removing of any bitter cup, whatever it be, it must be always with submission, yielding our-

selves to the holy will and pleasure of our heavenly Father. Thus did Christ, and thus ought we to do.

There is submission upon constraint, which is the same as patience: by force, when we yield of necessity, because we cannot help it. "Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous: but I said, Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it." Jer. x. 19. "I *must* bear it."

There is submission of choice, and this is Christ-like. "I *will* bear the indignation of the Lord." My wise Father knows better than I do.

To move to this, consider,

1. Prayers are to be regulated by promises. Now the promises run with limitation—in outward things, as far as shall be for our good and his glory. "No *good* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

2. It hath been the practice of all the saints: not of the Head only, as here, but of all his true living members. "And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city. If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. It is true, at another time we find him displeased under a cross providence—1 Chron. xiii. 11—

but it was in an hour of temptation—under a sudden surprise.

3. There is reason for it, considering who he is whose will we are thus to submit to,—thy sovereign Lord, thy loving Father.

4. That the likeliest way to have a mercy is to be willing to want it. We think to wrest mercies out of God's hand by our peremptoriness for them. As Rachel: "Give me children, or I die." But that is not the way. The way is, to refer it to him, if a temporal mercy, as the passing away of a bitter cup is; but for spiritual blessings we may, we must, be positive: Give me Christ, or else I die.

'But was Christ heard, was his prayer answered?' Yes, he was. (Heb. v. 7.) "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, *strengthening* him*." The cup did not pass, but he was enabled to drink it. This is a real answer to prayer. "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." Ps. cxxxviii. 3. Deut. iii. 26, 27.—'But how strengthening him?' Not by putting any strength into him which he had not, but by suggesting those suitable considerations which were

* "It is angel-like work for *Christians* to help to strengthen and comfort one another under sufferings."
Mr. Henry. Manuscript.

instead of a cordial: as, the glory that would redound to God—the good that would accrue to man—the name he was to have above every name —the nearness of the victory.

Praying, submitting souls, under whatever agonies they are, may assure themselves both of present supports under them, and a comfortable issue out of them. This that was done to Christ was written for our learning, that we might have hope. Therefore lift up the hands that hang down. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

SERMON IX.

1 PETER i. 9.

Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

THE subject is salvation; a sweet and comfortable subject! full of marrow and fatness to those that understand what it is, and what is contained in it. The text contains two doctrines:

I. That the salvation of our souls is the end of our faith. And,

II. That those that have received the salvation of their souls, which is the end of their faith, have cause to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

DOCTRINE I. The salvation of our souls is the end of our faith.

Shew, 1. What salvation this is meant of.

2. Prove it the end of our faith.

3. Apply it.

For the 1st. —What salvation is this meant of? Salvation is three-fold.—*Temporal:* in the things of the life that now is. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jer. viii. 20. When people are put into a safe, prosperous condition, free from enemies, burdens, grievances, we say they are saved. —*Spiritual:* in the things of our souls. When a man is converted, he is saved. Conversion is salvation. "And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." Luke xix. 9. "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Acts ii. 40. He is saved from the guilt and filth of all his sins past; from the *dominion* and power of them for time to come.—*Eternal:* in the world to come: begun at death, finished at the resurrection. The former is properly the salvation of the soul; the latter of soul and body together. It is no great matter of which of the two we understand it. They are both *salvation,* and they necessarily follow the one upon the other. He whose soul is saved at death, shall certainly be saved, soul and body, to eternity. Once in heaven, and ever in heaven. And that is the reason why it is called eternal salvation, Heb. v. 9, to distinguish it from and to give it the pre-eminence above all other salvations whatsoever.

For the 2d.—The salvation of our souls is the end of our faith *.

* "Faith includes in it, assent to the truth of something told us—application of it to ourselves—answerable affections within—and answerable actings without.

"The *object* of faith is all divine revealed doctrines, precepts, promises, threatenings, stories; and particularly what concerns Jesus Christ as Prince and Saviour. If it should be told you, which God forbid, by a voice from heaven, that the building in which you are should fall immediately; either you would believe it—that is, assent to the veracity of him that should tell you so, with application to yourselves—or not. If you *did*, the affection stirring within would be fear; the action without, flight. Now in reference to the great business of salvation, which is only by faith in Jesus Christ, there are sundry things that must be believed, that is, assented to with application and answerable affections and actings. As,

"1. That you are at present in a lost, undone condition, both by nature and by practice. Believe it, for God hath spoken it. Gal. iii. 22. Eph. ii. 3. Be grieved on account of it. Hasten out of it.

"2. That God hath set forth his Son Jesus Christ to be the propitiation for sin; and that besides him there is no other. Dost thou believe this? Dost thou begin to love him? Dost thou close with him? *This* ought to be believed. John iii. 16. Matt. iii. 7. John xiv. 6. Acts iv. 12.

"3. That immediately upon our receiving of Christ, and closing with Christ, we are made the children of God, and he becomes a Father to us—a reconciled Father—our sins are all forgiven, our persons justified, and there is no condemnation to us. John i. 12. Rom. viii. 1.

"4. That all that will have benefit by the death of Christ must be new creatures, die to sin, and live to God. Not be new first; but first believe, and close with him; and then, in sense of his great love, address to please him.

It is the end aimed at.—God aims at it in commanding us to believe. He would have none to be damned, but all to be saved. Why, then, believe, says he. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Ministers aim at it in persuading you to believe. The thing that we would have, is your salvation—that your souls may be saved, that is, go to heaven when they go out of your bodies. And therefore *believe*, say we. So runs our commission: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

The believer himself aims at it in his believing. Ask him, Why do you believe—that is, receive Jesus Christ offered to you in the Gospel? He will tell you it is that he may be saved. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Salvation is the end attained, as well as aimed

"5. That, besides the temporal things that are seen, there are eternal things not seen—an eternal hell and heaven;—that when we die, we must go to the one, to abide there for ever. O believe this. It is certainly so. And give all diligence to make your calling and election sure."

Mr. Henry. Manuscript.

at.—All *believers*, of what country, nation, or language soever they be, young or old, men or women, are undoubtedly saved. Nothing can come between a believer and heaven; between faith and salvation. Salvation is the end of faith.

(1.) As Noah's safety from the flood was the end of his going into the ark. He designed to be safe there by going in, and he was so. The ark is heaven, or rather Christ; for without being in him first, there is no getting to heaven.

(2.) As the malefactor's security in the city of refuge was the end of his flying thither. He aimed at it, and had it. It is by faith that the soul flies to Christ, being aware of the avenger of blood following and pursuing.

(3.) As a cure to those that were wounded was the end of their looking up to the brazen serpent. They thereby looked to have it, and they had it. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

(4.) As Canaan was the end of the Israelites' both coming out of Egypt and travelling through the wilderness. They expected it in so doing, and obtained it. So believing is yielding ourselves to the conduct of our heavenly Moses.

(5.) As enjoying any thing promised is the end

of performing the condition. He that makes the promise designs it; and he that performs the condition expects it, and hath it. As suppose a jewel tendered upon condition of acceptance. Now by faith it is that we receive Christ offered in the Gospel, and salvation by him.

For the 3d—the application—learn,

1. What an excellent grace the grace of faith is, that hath salvation for the end of it. It is a poor thing in itself to receive, to look, to accept: but what is the end? what comes of it when it is done? Salvation—the salvation of the soul, that precious jewel!

2. How righteous a thing it is that they should miss of salvation that will not believe—the end so rich and high; the means so small and inconsiderable. The end of unbelief is damnation.

3. Exhortation to all by all means to believe—that is, in the sense of their lost and undone condition to lay hold of the hope set before them in the Gospel. Consider—it will save your precious souls.

DOCTRINE. II. Those that have received the salvation of their souls, which is the end of their faith, have cause to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Shew, 1. What this receiving is. How can they that are yet in the body be said, in any sense, to have received the salvation of their souls.

2. What cause they have to rejoice with such great joy.

3. The application.

1. Shew what this *receiving* is.

To receive a thing, is when the thing is present. The salvation of our souls is not present, but to come.

(1.) In the day in which we believe we receive salvation, as we do then receive the promise of salvation. Faith is closing with the promise. The great promise which faith closes with in conversion, is the promise of salvation. He that believes shall be saved. 'Who says so?' The Eternal God, that cannot lie or deceive; whose word is not yea and nay, but yea and amen. Faithful is he that hath promised. And is he so? saith the soul; then why should I think he will deceive me? He will not—he cannot. Lord, I

believe. I take Christ to be mine, and give myself to be his. Then I shall be saved. When God had spoken it, that David should be king, he concluded confidently it should be so. "The words of the Lord are pure words." Ps. xii. 6. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and *embraced* them." Heb. xi. 13. Embracing is of friends present. Faith in the promise makes the thing promised present.

(2.) In the day in which we believe we receive salvation, as we do then receive the Author of salvation, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him?" He, and none but he, can be the Saviour: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." And he is qualified for it every way. "Wherefore, he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Now faith is the soul's coming to God by him. Till we *believe*, we are *departing* from God. Believing is coming to him; and Christ is the "way, and the truth, and the life." John xiv. 6. He is the old way, the only way, and the open way. Art thou

walking in it? Salvation is certainly before thee, if thou art. Marry the heir, and the inheritance is thine.

(3.) In the day in which we believe, we receive salvation, as we do then receive the earnest of salvation. In making bargains, when the earnest is given and taken, we reckon the thing bargained for our own. We received it, when we received the *earnest* of it. Now the earnest of salvation is the Spirit of grace as a sanctifier, renewing us after the image of God, implanting in us holy dispositions of soul towards God. This is called the new man. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." Eph. i. 13, 14. "Who hath sealed us, and given the *earnest* of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. i. 22.

The earnest is always of the same kind with the thing bargained for; as, if for money, money. A pledge or pawn is of something else—as a ring, or goods. Now grace is the same thing with glory, only a lower degree.

The earnest is always part of payment. So is the work of sanctification—it is the suburbs of heaven.

If the bargain be not performed, the earnest is lost. So if heaven be not the believer's portion, all the grace he enjoys on earth is lost. Impossible! It is the seed of God; it is the spring "springing up unto everlasting life."

(4.) In the day in which we believe, we receive salvation; as we do then, or afterwards, receive the first-fruits and foretastes of salvation. When the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they received the vintage of Canaan in the clusters brought them. So does the Christian now on earth. He has a joy *full of glory*—that is, of the same kind with the joy of heaven, only differing in degree.

2. What cause have such persons to rejoice with such great joy *.

* "The evils they are, and are to be more and more, delivered from, are:—

"1. The guilt of sin, the wrath of God, the curse of the law.

"2. The dominion and power of sin—it shall no more reign.

"3. The clutches of Satan—he may *tempt*, but he cannot hurt them.

"4. The evil of this world, and of every condition while they are in it.

"5. The sting of death and the power of the grave.

"6. The damnation of hell.

"The good things they are, and are to be more and more, possessed of, are:—

(1.) They are saved from hell.—And what is hell? Hell is, to be accursed from Christ; that is, separated with a curse. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Hell is the bottomless pit — the company of devils and damned spirits — destruction from the presence of the Lord — everlasting punishment — falling into the hands of the living God. It is gnashing of teeth to see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and themselves thrust out. It is hideous horror of conscience, in downright, absolute despair. It is ignominy—shame and confusion of face for ever. Dan. xii. 2. It is kindled brimstone — a lake of fire — misery without mercy — a never-dying worm — outer darkness — a perpetual prison. It is to be shut out of heaven — to be tormented. Hell is vengeance eternal—wrath in the day of wrath, and in the

"1. The love and favour of God, and the light of his countenance, living and dying.

"2. Admission into his kingdom and glory—to be *for ever* in his immediate presence, to see him as he is.

"3. Everlasting rest after all their labour in this world; and to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God; nay, which is better, to be with Jesus in an eternal state—to be made perfect in holiness.

"4. Security, that nothing of this shall ever fail—no falling from it. Is there not matter for joy, and especially that that joy should terminate in Christ, who purchased al this for us?" *Mr. Henry. Manuscript.*

place of wrath. It is the eternity of every thing that doth afflict.

This is hell, a rude draught of it, which salvation frees us from. And should not the saved be *glad*, though poor, and scattered, and afflicted?

(2.) Salvation is heaven.—And what is heaven? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Heaven is entire union with God, and with the saints. It is immediate vision: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall *see* God." Matt. v. 8. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall *see him as he is*. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." 1 John iii. 2, 3. Heaven is enjoyment uninterrupted—joy unspeakable—perfect holiness—perpetual sabbath—prepared glory—pleasures for evermore. Heaven is, to be comforted, Luke xvi. 25—to be crowned, not with a crown of gold, but with a crown of glory. It is to be with Christ: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." Phil. i. 23. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, *be with me* where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John xvii. 24; Luke xxiii. 43.

Heaven is, to be confirmed in all this happiness, so as to be in no danger of losing it. The angels lost it.

Is this heaven? Nay, the one half is not told you. And should not they be glad that have received all this—received it in hope, though not in hand; in reversion, though not in possession? They that have it in *possession*, are always singing for joy night and day; and should not we, that are in the way to it, within a step, perhaps, of it, in our measure be glad and rejoice in it; at least now and then? *

3. The application.

(1.) How much doth it concern us, then, to ex-

* "There are three motives that should move the people of God to rejoice:—

"1. For God's sake, and if we love him—that his name may be glorified. *Turpe est imperatori, quando miles cum gemens sequitur—It is a disgrace to a commander when a soldier follows him groaning.* How angry was God upon this account with the spies! Micah vi. 23.

"2. For religion's sake, if we love that—that *it* may be beautified. Your dejections are discouraging to others—keep some from coming in; cause others to droop with you—especially if you are an ancient, unblemished professor. See Deut. viii. 20.

"3. For your own sake—if you love yourselves. You little think how joy strengthens, both for doing and suffering. 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.' Neh. viii. 10. You little think how it enlarges. It causes to abound in duty: it is as oil to the wheels."

Mr. Henry. Manuscript.

amine and try, have we received this salvation—that is, have we believed? Where is thy faith? That is the hand: there is no salvation any other way. Repentance is not the hand, nor charity, nor prayer: only faith. Salvation is not the end of our good works: it is *at the end* of them, if they be done in faith; else not.

The trial of faith is:—How was it *wrought?* If born with us, if easily come by, suspect it. Did it come by hearing? Was the foundation of it laid in sound convictions?—How doth it *work?* Is it heart-purifying? "Purifying their hearts by faith." Is it world-overcoming? "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Does it quench temptation? "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked." Does it increase our love? "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Does it promote obedience? "We have received grace for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name."

2. If never yet received, now receive it. Can a richer offer be made you? Salvation is the one thing needful, the pearl of price. O make it your own!

3. You that have received it, rejoice; and again

I say, rejoice. You have reason, whatever your outward condition be. See Rom. v. 1, 2, 3, &c. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

SERMON X.

EZEKIEL xvi. 2.

Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.

THESE words are a call or commission from the great God to his servant the Prophet Ezekiel: where observe,

1. The title he gives him: *Son of Man.*—Only Ezekiel and the Prophet Daniel, and our Lord Jesus Christ, are styled expressly in this manner. Our Lord Jesus is styled so to evidence the truth of his humanity, that he was really and truly a child of Adam. The other two are so styled with respect to the great honour and dignity done unto them in the visions which they had beyond others; notwithstanding which, they were to know themselves to be but men, and to be humble accordingly, not puffed up. It is like the thorn given to Paul for the same reason. 2 Cor. xii. And it had that effect immediately upon him: "Though I be nothing," verse 11.

Note: It is good for those that are advanced by God above others, to be kept low and poor in spirit. As the stars; the higher they are, the less glaring is their light. As ears of corn; the more full they are, the more they bend downward.

2. The special work he sends him about: *Cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.*—The same purport with the message given to the prophet Isaiah: "Shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." And he doth it to purpose in the following verses of the chapter. He compares them in their beginning to a new-born infant weltering in blood, but by some happy hand pitied and succoured, and afterwards, when grown up, married; but after marriage most shamefully playing the harlot. Such was their conduct towards God.

Now this he must tell them of, dealing plainly with them, without flattery, that they might be made to *know it.*

Note,

I. That our sins are our abominations.

An abomination is any thing that is hateful and loathsome. And is not sin so? Certainly it is: the most abominable abomination. It is the abomination of desolation, or that which maketh desolate.

1. It is abominable in itself.—The Holy Ghost

in Scripture compares it to the mire of swine;—to the vomit of a dog, 2 Pet. ii. 22;—to the scum of a pot, Ezek. xxiv;—to the plague, 1 Kings viii. 38;—to the putrefaction of a grave, Matt. xxiii.;—to the dross of metal, Ps. cxix. 119. "Son of Man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver." Ezek. xxii. 18. What more loathsome than sin?

2. God abhors it.—It is the one thing that he hates. His love has *various* objects; his hatred, sin *only*. "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate." He cannot endure to look upon it: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity." Hab. i. 13; Ps. v. 4. We may wonder, then, at his infinite patience; that he sees so much, and yet bears so long.

3. It makes the sinner abominable.

It makes him abominable to God. When the angels sinned, how soon they were turned out of heaven! How quickly was Adam, when he sinned, turned out of Paradise! "Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me." Zech. xi. 8.

It makes them abominable to good men—to such as God hath savingly enlightened. "An unjust man is an abomination to the just." In

their eyes "A vile person is contemned; but they honour them that fear the Lord."

It makes them abominable to themselves, if ever God gives them repentance. "They shall loath themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations." Ezek. vi. 9. "Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." Job xl. 3, 4. See also Job xlii. 5, 6; Ps. lxxiii. 22; Prov. xxx. 2.

Then learn hence what to think of sin — of all sin, especially your own sin. Count it as a loathsome, abominable thing; and have nothing to do with it, no more than you would with the plague or leprosy.

Note,

II. That even Jerusalem hath her abominations.

Jerusalem was the holy city, and yet it was greatly polluted. The inhabitants were the professing people of the God of heaven, his only professing people, and yet they were a sinful and provoking people. "Shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."

And is it not so now, even at this day? Hath not our Jerusalem her abominations? Have not God's professing people among us their abominations? Certainly they have. It is manifest by the controversy that God hath begun with us; nay, more

than begun, it hath been of long continuance; and our abominations are the cause of it.

'What abominations?'—There are no abominations to be found among others but what may be found also among the professing people of God. Noah was drunk; Lot was incestuous; David was guilty of murder and adultery; and Peter denied his Master. But, then, this is not an ordinary thing: it happens only now and then: here and there one may so miscarry. As eclipses, they are not daily, nor often. It is not their *course* and way, neither. Their *trade* is otherwise. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who *walk* in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies. They also do no iniquity: they *walk* in his ways." When they have fallen into sin, they repent.

But there are abominations which we have especial reason to take notice of in others, and in ourselves.

1. Formality in the duties of God's worship.—There is not that constancy, that evenness, that life and liveliness, in our secret and family worship, and in our solemn assemblies, which there ought to be. There is seldomness, straitness, and formality in our services. This God abhors.

2. Too much friendship with the world.—With the *men* of the world. Too much joining in league with them; too much association with them of

choice, and with delight; too frequently intermarriages with them. This is the case also as it respects the *things* of the world. Alas! what covetous desires, and what covetous practices!

3. Flesh-pleasing.—Making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof: even serving divers lusts and pleasures—for the belly, in meats and drinks; for the back, in apparel. As do others, so do many who profess the Christian name.

4. Foolish walking towards them that are without.—We ought to walk in wisdom towards such. Col. iv. 6: "Let your speech be always with grace." But do we so? Are we not accessary to the hardening of them, and making them worse, by scandals and offences, conforming to them, and complying with them beyond what should be?

5. Feuds within and among ourselves.—Are there not janglings and jarrings, not only in religious matters, but in other things, concerning trifles? See 1 Cor. vi.

These are some of the many abominations that might be noticed, and they are matter for lamentation.

Note,

III. It is a desirable thing for people to know their abominations.

Knowledge of sin is two-fold. There is an empty and notional knowledge: a knowledge that

such and such things are sins, and that we have been guilty of them. There is also a powerful and practical knowledge of sin: a knowledge of it so as to understand the *evil* of it; that it is an abomination; a thing to be abhorred, especially as it is against God; and to feel from it accordingly. As Job: "Thou writest bitter things against me, and *makest me to possess* the iniquities of my youth."

This knowledge of sin is desirable,

1. Because, if we do not know our sins, we can never repent of them. Who is sorry for that which he sees no harm in? Conviction goes before contrition *.

* "There are two characters which may be given of true sorrow for sin. It is *great* sorrow,—deep, solid, and substantial. There may be great outward expressions of sorrow, and yet but little sorrow, if any at all. Thus Ahab mourned. 1 Kings xxi. 27. But there may be great sorrow within, and yet none without. Waters may run deep and yet silently. Fire may burn vehemently, and yet there may be no flame. Now it is the greatness of our inward sorrow that God regards. Joel ii. 13. True mourning for sin is not garment-work, but heart-work. There *may be* excessive sorrow for sin. This is the case: 1. When we mourn so as to disparage the pardoning mercy of God in Christ. We must never mourn for sin with both eyes; but while one eye is mourning for sin, the other must be upon Christ. 2. When our mourning puts us by duty, either of God's worship, or of our particular calling. Ezra was in great sorrow for sin, but it was till the evening sacrifice. Ezra ix. 4. 3. When it proves a stumbling-block to others, so

2. If we do not repent of our sins, we cannot be forgiven. "Repent ye, therefore, and be con-

as to hinder them from being in love with the ways of God. See 2 Cor. ii. 11.

"True sorrow for sin is likewise *godly* sorrow—or, more properly, *sorrow according to God.* It is so because of its origin: it comes from God. It is so because it is acceptable to him. Ps. li. 17, 19. It is so because of its grounds and motives: such sorrow has respect to God. Zech. xii. 10; Ezek. vi. 9; Ps. li. 4. The worst thing in sin, is, that it is against God. True sorrow for sin is godly, because of its tendency—it brings us to God. After mourning, comes supplication. Zech. xii. 10; Luke xviii. 13.

"The preceding description of true sorrow for sin includes the following particulars.

"1. Sincerity and uprightness.—Man is often deceived with pretences, but God cannot.

"2. Timeliness.—In *this life.* In the judgment it will be too late: in hell it is to no purpose: *Now* is the time. True repentance is never too late in this world; but *late* repentance is seldom *true.*—When God in his providence *calls us to repent.* When he is punishing us for sin, he especially calls us to repentance. When God calls us to it by the inward motions of his Spirit and grace.—When we have done any thing that we have cause to be sorry for. We are daily transgressing, therefore we should be daily mourning.—When we draw near to God in solemn worship. James iv. 8, 9; Ps. xxvi. 6.—And when we are dying. Then we shall take leave of sorrow for sin for ever.

"3. Secrecy.—Zech. xii. 12. He that never mourns for sin but when others are witnesses, mourns not sincerely. Matt. vi. Where the sin has been scandalous, our sorrow must be seen. Compare 1 Cor. v. with 2 Cor. vii. viii. &c.

"4. Universality.—He that is truly sorry for sin, is sorry for *every* sin. For Adam's sin—for the corruption of his nature—for heart sins: ignorance, atheism, pride, hypocrisy,

verted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts iii. 19. Otherwise, they cannot.

3. If we are not forgiven, we cannot be saved. There must be justification here, or there will be no glorification hereafter. See Rom. viii. 28.

How much, then, are those out of the way, who have no desire to know their sins; nay, who cover them all they can, not only from others and from God, but from themselves too! "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy." Therefore,

We should all of us desire to know our sins. We should desire it of God: "That which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more." Job xxxiv. 32. We should seek it in the use of means, especially in the ministry of the word.

Note,

IV. That the ministry of the word is a means appointed of God to bring people to the knowledge of their abominations.

ambition, lukewarmness—for sins of omission—for sins of youth—for pardoned sins—for the sins of others.

"5. Duration.—This sorrow will abide. It is not like the waters of a land-flood; making a great noise, and gone presently. It is not true sorrow, if it be not lasting sorrow. Those that mourn shall be comforted.

"6. Shame and self-abhorrence.—Ezra ix."

Mr. Henry. Manuscript.

"Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations." If Jerusalem must know her abominations, this son of man, the prophet Ezekiel, must be the instrument to cause her to know them. It might have been done in another way—immediately, by the Spirit suggesting it to them; or by one another, reproving; or by the ministry of angels. But *this* is the way in which God *appoints* it to be done. It is true, we read, in Judges ii., of an angel of the Lord bringing a convincing message, ver. 1, 2. And we see in the 4th verse what a good effect it had: "And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice and wept." But that angel, it is supposed, was no other than some prophet, or holy man of God, employed for that purpose; and called an angel, that is, a messenger; for it is said in the 1st verse, he "came up from Gilgal."

1. I shall shew that the ministry of the word is the ordinary way of bringing people to know their abominations.
2. Inquire why God hath chosen this way.
3. Shew what use we are to make of it.

For the 1st.—The ministry of the word is God's ordinary means to bring people to know their abominations.

Look into the Scripture, and you will find there that so it is. You see it,

(1.) By the calls and commissions, which are there recorded, given to ministers to go upon this particular errand. See here, in the case of Ezekiel; and in the case of Isaiah before mentioned, chap. lviii. 1. See the case also of Micah: "Truly," said that prophet, "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." chap. iii. 8. Not that this was all they had to do: they were also to counsel and to comfort: but this was one great thing, and they did it. John the Baptist, "when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Matt. iii. 7. Peter furnishes another instance: "Ye men of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

(2.) By the comparisons and similitudes that both the word, and the minsters of the word, are set forth by in the Scriptures.

As to the *word*.—The Apostle says in general, "it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Two of these — reproof and correction — relate to sin; causing us to know that. Now the word is compared to a *glass*, a looking-glass, which is of

use to shew us our natural face and features, and all the spots and blemishes that are on it. James i. 23, 24. It is ministers' work to hold forth this glass to us for this end and purpose. It has all the properties of a good glass. It is clear: ministers are to help to clear it. It is true: it will flatter no man, whether great or small. It is large and broad: it will shew all. It is lasting: it will endure for ever. It is said, the laver, in which the priests were to wash, was inlaid with looking-glasses, that they might see where to wash, and what to wash. Exod. xxxviii. 8. The word of God is of great use in the business of self-examination. *Here*, *here* you are to look at your face: not in false glasses, that represent things otherwise than they are, calling good evil, and evil good: but "to the law and to the testimony" we must ever appeal.

The word is compared to a *light*. "The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light." Prov. vi. 23. The proper work of light is to discover and make manifest. That which is not seen in the dark, when light comes, appears. Now, "the law is light." It discovers to us our abominations; it shews us what is amiss, both in the heart and in the life. "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. For I was alive without the law once; but when the com-

mandment came, sin revived, and I died." Many a poor soul, besides Paul, is able to say the same: "When the commandment came"—that is, came with life, and power, and efficacy; not in the letter of it only, but in the Spirit, with application—"sin revived, and I died."

As to *Ministers.*—They are compared to *watchmen*, whose duty it is to warn of sin and of punishment, and of the danger of both. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me."—They are compared to *sword-bearers*. As magistrates bear the sword in the hand to punish for sin, so ministers bear the sword in the mouth to convince of sin; "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Eph. vi. 17.—They are compared to *surgeons*, or *physicians*, whose duty it is to search wounds, and to apply corrosives as there is cause. This is to be done, although the people may be altogether for "smooth things." Reproofs are wholesome: "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.

(3.) By the examples and instances of those that have been brought to a sight of sin by the preaching of the word. See Acts ii.

For the 2d.—Why hath God chosen this way?

It is for the abasement of man, and for the advancement of his own praise. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us *."

When a proud, secure, stubborn sinner, traversing his way like the wild ass, or the dromedary, is on a sudden, by an awakening word, stopped in his career, brought down and humbled, and made to cry out, Men and brethren, what shall I do? or, as the Jailor, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" or, as Paul, who, "trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—who can but say the finger of God is here? "This is the *Lord's* doing, and let it be marvellous in our eyes." The preaching of a sermon could never have done it without Him, without his arm and power going along with it. "After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

For the 3d.—What use are we to make of this subject?

1. If this be so, we learn what a great mercy it is to a people to enjoy the ministry of the word, and what a great misery it is to want it. It was a saying in Chrysostom's time: "It were better the sun should not shine, than Chrysostom should

* See Sermon XV.

not preach." The shining of the sun is necessary to the enlightening of the world, and a dark place it would be without it: so is powerful preaching necessary to spiritual illumination—to shew people their abominations.

2. We learn what kind of preachers and preaching are best, and most to be desired; namely, that which is most faithful in shewing us our sins. What Ahab said of Micaiah is commonly said of such; "I hate him, for he never speaketh good of me, but evil." But afterwards, in the issue, the contrary appears. They are not foes, but friends, that deal plainly with us. "He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue."

3. We see what should be our great end in coming to hear the word; namely, this: that we may meet with discoveries of our abominations. If we read it, if we hear it, this should be in our eye. It is a good sign when people are willing to know the worst of themselves: it is a bad sign when it is otherwise. It should be one request put up for the preacher, that God would guide his way into our bosom; and tell him, that he may tell us, what are our abominations.

4. We learn what we are to do when the word meets us; and what, when it doth not.

What are we to do when the word *does* meet with us?

(1.) We are to be very thankful to God; look upon it as a great mercy; and let him have the praise of it. Many live and die in blindness and hardness, and never have any discoveries of sin made to them.

(2.) Cherish and make much of the discoveries which the word makes of sin. Take heed of stifling, of smothering, of extinguishing them. Some do it by worldly business as Cain—building cities, Gen. iv.; others by merry company. Some have recourse to one scheme, and some to another. "Quench not the Spirit." This prohibition includes the contrary precept, Encourage the Holy Spirit — yield to his motions — cherish his influence.

(3.) Pursue and prosecute those discoveries for the ends wherefore you have them. Sin is therefore discovered that you may repent, confess it, and amend. Do it quickly, that the sight of your wound, your debt, your spots, may bring you to Christ—the balm, the surety, the fountain. If this be not done, God is provoked to speak to us no more, to take his word away from us.

What are we to do when the word does *not* meet with us?

(1.) Bewail it as a judgment. For so it is—a spiritual judgment. To be given up to a dumb ministry is a sore judgment. "There shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them

for their ways, and reward them for their doings." Hos. iv. 9.

(2.) Cry mightily to God, that he will yet return in mercy. Be earnest with him, resolving to have no denial:—Shew me my sins: Lord, give commission to ministers for that purpose. "In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the Lord."

SERMON XI*.

ZEPHANIAH iii. 2.

She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God.

HERE are four things charged upon this people, for which a *woe* is denounced against them. They are all four sins of omission. This is the first: "She obeyed not the voice."

DOCTRINE. There is a voice, which, if we do not obey, it doth certainly expose us to the Divine woes.

I take it for granted, one great business of Fasts is, to have sin brought to our remembrance—in order to our repentance for time past; our reformation for time to come. The query will be to-day: Have we *obeyed* the voice of the Lord?

* Preached at Broad Oak, at a monthly Fast, July 12th 1693.

Shew I. What voice this is meant of.
II. What it is to obey that voice.
III. What evil there is in not obeying it.
IV. What woes disobedience to it exposes us to.
V. Apply the subject.

I. What voice is here meant?

By the voice here, is certainly meant God's voice.

Now God hath many ways of speaking to the children of men: he speaks in "*divers manners.*" Heb. i. 1. By dreams, and visions, and revelations, formerly; which, whoever had them, knew them to be of God by an evidence of their own, which they carried with them: so that they could not be deceived. But to us he speaks not so now, though he hath no where tied his own hands from doing it, nor said he will not so speak.

1. In these last days, he hath spoken unto us by his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Heb. i. 2. —Him he sent from heaven on purpose to declare unto us his eternal counsel concerning our salvation. Not to obey the voice, is not to obey Jesus Christ: it is to refuse to be ruled by him, to learn of him, to do what he would have us to do. And are we none of us guilty in that matter?

2. He speaks by his Spirit.—Each of the seven epistles to the seven churches closes with a solemn

address: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev. ii. and iii. Wherever God hath a church, there he is present by his Spirit speaking to people: speaking conviction and instruction, to quicken and to comfort. And we ought to obey that voice, and to do accordingly. Sometimes he strives; that is, speaks more earnestly than at other times; but that will not last always. Gen. vi. 3. We must take heed, then, of resisting, of grieving, of quenching, of doing despite to the Spirit of Grace. Acts vii. 51; Eph. iv. 30; 1 Thess. v. 19; and Heb. x. 29.

3. The written word is God's voice.—As often as you read, or hear a chapter read to you, God speaks to you. "Thus saith the Lord," "These things spake Jesus," frequently meet us. Nay, when you are not reading, perhaps not once from the beginning of the week to the end of it, God is all that while speaking, though you heed him not. He says, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."

It is a great mercy of God to us that we are thus spoken to by a written word, and not by oral tradition: not by *Bath-Kol**, "the daughter of the

* "By this name the Jewish writers distinguish what they call a revelation from God, after verbal prophecy had ceased in Israel; that is, after the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The generality of their traditions

voice," as the Rabbins call the oral tradition, which was much more subject to error and mistake than the written word can possibly be. "I have *written* to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing." Hos. viii. 12.—Oh, love your Bibles. It is the character of a godly man, that he loves his Bible. "O how love I thy law!" said David; "it is my meditation all the day."

4. God speaks by ministers.—They are his ambassadors. 2 Cor. v. 20. "He that heareth you," said our Lord to his disciples, to his ministers, "heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." Luke x. 16. John the Baptist was the *voice* of one crying. He was not the crier—the Crier was God himself—he was but the voice of the Crier. Matt. iii.; Mark i.; Luke iii.

and customs are founded on this *Bath-Kol.* They pretend that God revealed them to their elders, not by prophecy, but by secret inspiration, or by tradition; which they call the *daughter of the voice.*—The *Bath-Kol,* as Dr. Prideaux shews, was a fantastical way of divination invented by the Jews, like the Sortes Virgilianæ among the Heathen. For, as with them the words first dipped at in opening the works of that poet were the oracle whereby they prognosticated those future events which they desired to be informed of; so with the Jews, when they appealed to *Bath-Kol,* the next words which they should hear drop from any one's mouth were taken as the desired oracle."—*Calmet in loco. Prid. Connect.* Part II. book v.

So is every minister speaking to you in God's name, according to what is written in God's word: he is God's voice: and you must hearken to him and obey him accordingly. If you do not, there is an omission. "She obeyed not the voice"—that is, she regarded not the prophet that God sent unto her. "I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness."

5. God speaks by conscience—a still voice.—Conscience has a voice to be obeyed. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts." Prov. xx. 27. Its office is, first, to tell us of our duty, what we ought to do; and next, to tell us of our faults when we have done amiss, and to call us to repentance for it. And in both we are to hearken. Now, have we no disobedience to the voice of conscience to charge ourselves with to-day? Hath not something within us said, "Do not do so and so—do not neglect prayer—do not profane the sabbath—do not neglect the communion?" And have we hearkened? Have we not turned a deaf ear?

6. God speaks by friends, by parents, by brethren, by fellow-servants; such, especially, as we have given the right hand of fellowship to in holy ordinances.—"They that feared the Lord spake

often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it: and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord." Thus David was kept from falling into the great sin of bloodshed by discreet Abigail: see 1 Sam. xxv. *Vox populi Dei est vox Dei—The voice of the people of God is the voice of God himself.*

7. God speaks by providences, both in mercy and in judgment.—Every *mercy* hath a voice. What says it? O love the God and giver of this mercy: love him, and be thankful, and fruitful: love him, and use it well to his praise.—Every *cross* also hath a voice, and it is the Lord's voice. "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." This voice calls us to repentance and amendment of life. Sometimes the call is very loud. It is our duty to obey. Is it the death of a near and dear relation that addresses us? Sit loose to creature-comforts. Is it disappointment? Say not, "I shall never be moved." Be obedient to the voice of God.

II. What is it to obey the voice of God?

It is not only to give it a hearing, but to *do* according to it: that is obedience.

The voice says sometimes one thing, sometimes another; but whatever it says, it is our duty to

obey, without gainsaying or contradicting. This obedience must have three properties.

1. It must be single-eyed.—What I do, I must do because the voice tells me—that is, God by the voice. We must look at his word and will as our warrant.

2. It must be in the name of Jesus Christ. In his strength alone, for without him we can do nothing. — We must not trust to any thing in ourselves, but to his merit and mediation alone, for acceptance.

3. It must be with constancy and perseverance.—We must not begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh. There must be a *patient continuance* in well-doing, if we would have glory and honour and eternal life. Rom. ii. 7. We must not do as the Jews in Jeremiah's time, who released their Jewish servants, and then brought them into subjection again. Jer. xxxiv. We must not be inconstant, but " stedfast, and unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Consider,

III. The evil of not obeying God's voice.

There is *much* evil in it: it brings *great* guilt upon the soul.

Disobedience is the one general word that is put for all manner of sin. " By one man's disobedience many were made sinners"—that is, by Adam

eating the forbidden fruit. It was disobedience, not obeying the voice of God, that brought all sin and misery into the world. And it is the same still; the nature of disobedience is not a jot altered. But the evil of it will more particularly appear if we consider,

1. Whose voice it is that is diobeyed. It is the voice of God. Not of a man like ourselves, but the voice of the great God!—It is his voice, who is *King of kings;* whose subjects we are. Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say unto him, What dost thou? Yet we say so to God. "Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" Exod. v. 2. "Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" Ps. xii. 4. Such is the language of every presumptuous sin.—It is the voice of him who is our *Lord and Master;* whose servants we are, and whom we are bound to obey upon account of our relation. How do you, who have servants, like them to disobey you?—It is his voice who is our *Redeemer and Saviour.* Of him, who "delivered us out of the hand of our enemies, that we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." This was his end in purchasing us. Titus ii. 14.—It is his voice who is our *Father*—by creation, by adoption. It is the duty of children to obey their parents in all things: we expect it from

them: and is it not our duty to obey our heavenly Father? "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you." Mal. i. 6. See, concerning the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv. "We have obeyed," say they, "and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us." O think what *this* Father of thine hath done for thee, and then say, "Do I thus requite the Lord? Is not he my Father, that bought me? hath he not made me, and established me?"—Remember, by not obeying his voice we affront him, we mock him. As was the case with the wise men and Herod: "He saw that he was mocked of them." How was this? He sent them to Bethlehem, and directed them to bring him word again; but we are informed, that, "being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." See Matt. ii. They did not do as he bid them. It is all one as if we spat in the face of God, such is the contempt of wilful disobedience. "The Lord said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days?" Numb. xii. 14. How much more if she had spit in her father's face?

2. At whose instigation and by whose sugges-

tion we do it.—It is at the instigation of the devil, who is both God's enemy and our own. If he bid us go, we go: if he say come, we come. How readily is his voice obeyed at every whisper, upon the least motion, though to our hurt, to our eternal hurt! Now this aggravates the crime. When Adam disobeyed God's voice, he obeyed the voice of the serpent. One of the Fathers brings in Satan pleading against sinners—'Lord, I never did that for them which thou didst; I made them not, I redeemed them not; yet they serve and obey me.' How will this shame us! Consider,

3. How often this hath been done; in how many instances, upon how many occasions—on sabbath-days, on week-days.—The angels for *one* single act of disobedience were turned out of heaven: Adam was banished from Paradise for *once* eating the forbidden fruit: but we have often, often disobeyed. "Innumerable evils have compassed us about." Consider,

4. For what poor advantages we have done it, and how little we have got by it.—"Let them be ashamed that transgress without cause." Psal. xxv. 3. "What *fruit* had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death." Rom. vi. 21. We all cry shame on Judas for selling Christ for thirty pieces of silver—seventeen shillings and ninepence;—yet

how many sell him for less every day—for a moment's sinful pleasure; for the sake of a wicked oath! Consider,

5. How all the other creatures obey his voice. —The sun, the earth, the sea: "Fire and hail; snow and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word." This is the work of creatures below us. So it is with the angels above us: "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure." Inquire,

IV. What *woes* disobedience to the voice of God exposes us to.

All the miseries both of this and the other world are included. See it in short Gal. iii. 10: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them:" that is, that obeys not the voice of God. See it at large Deut. xxviii. One tore that leaf out of his Bible, as Jehoiakim cut the roll: see Jer. xxxvi. But did they get any thing by it? "Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein, from the mouth of Jeremiah, all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words." It was

upon a fasting-day that the roll was cut and burned. One would have thought he should have been in a better mind. But it is easier to keep twenty fasts, than once to obey the voice as we ought to obey it.

See an instance of disobedience in Saul, 1 Sam. xv. And what came of it? "Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offering and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice..... For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.....Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." verses 22, 23. Disobedience is commonly applied to people's rebellion against their king; but it is plainly spoken there of a king rebelling against God.

V. The application.

'What is all this to us? Wherein are we concerned?' Not a little; each of us, both upon the account of the public, and upon our own account.

1. We are concerned upon the public account. —The *she* here, that obeyed not the voice, was Jerusalem. It is put to signify the body of that people, together with the magistrates and ministers, princes and priests, inhabiting that place especially. These did not obey the voice of the Lord. Let us apply it to our own land and nation; and

it is as true of England as it was of Jerusalem. She hath not obeyed the voice of God.

(1.) Not the voice of the word preached.—No nation under heaven hath had that plenty of the means of grace that England hath had — that plain, practical, powerful preaching. Young scholars are sent hither from far, on purpose to learn our language, that they may translate our English sermons into their own. But have we obeyed the voice? Hath the fruit brought forth been according to the means, the dews, the waterings, that we have had? See Isa. v. 1, 2, &c.

(2.) Not the voice of public judgments.—Upon *ourselves*. Particularly the Plague and Fire heretofore *, unto which the like were never known in this island: the one against the inhabitants; the other upon the habitations. And was the voice thereof heard? Hath London been a better London since, than it was before? Hath it not been the same, nay worse?—Of late, too, his voice was heard in the dreadful earthquake in our plantation at Jamaica, twelve months last June. And in the September after, in London itself,

* The Plague and Fire in London are here alluded to. The former visited that city in the year 1665, and the latter in 1666. See an excellent Sermon in "Commemoration of the Burning of London," by Mr. Matthew Henry, in his Miscellaneous Works edited by the Rev. Messrs. Burder and Hughes, p. 620.

though, blessed be God! no such harm was done —yet many were sorely affrighted. Hath the voice been heard? 'What said it?' O fear the Lord, ye sons of men: stand in awe of him: for he is a great and terrible God.

Upon *neighbouring nations.* Especially the desolations made upon the poor Protestant churches in France. Their congregations were broken up; not one left in all that great kingdom. The shepherds were smitten, and the sheep scattered. What said the voice of that to us? Be thankful, and bless God for your peace. Learn to hate and abhor that religion that hath no better way to propagate it than by fire and sword.—Have we forgot the work that was in Ireland three or four years ago? the flying of some, the slaying of others, the burning of houses and towns? And what said that voice? Hear, O England, and be thankful, and say, Is there any reason that we alone should escape among the nations?

(3.) Not the voice of public mercies and deliverances.—I will mention two of late, never to be forgotten. The one is, our deliverance as Dissenters from the penalties of mischievous laws by means of King James, whom God was pleased to make use of as the instrument of that mercy to us, though there is reason to believe he designed us no good. 'And what says this voice?' That God is free to make use of what instruments he pleases

for the good of his Church; — that oftentimes, when misery is looked for, mercy comes; — that therefore we are concerned to keep in favour with God. Have we obeyed this voice, and carried it accordingly?

The other is, Our deliverance, in common with other Protestants, from Popery and slavery, into both which we were hastening apace, by means of King William, who was strangely raised up, and blessed in his undertaking, and owned hitherto. Is it forgotten? It is by some, notwithstanding the loud voice it had. The voice then called on us to love that God who did such great things for us; and out of love to him, to mend our ways and our doings. O let us bewail this day, and cry to God for peace and pardon in Christ Jesus.

2. We are concerned upon our own account.— As to ourselves, in our private, personal capacity, have we obeyed the voice? Have we not disobeyed, and slighted, and gainsayed it? 'What voice?'

(1.) The voice that has called us to repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus; the great Gospel voice. Are none of you impenitent and unbelieving, and will not come to Christ, and take his yoke?

(2.) The voice that has called us to leave our sins: the drunkard to leave his drunkenness; the swearer, the wanton, the covetous, their iniquities.

(3.) The voice that has called us to set up the worship of God in our families and in secret, and to make a business of it.

(4.) The voice that has called us to join ourselves in the fellowship of the Gospel in holy ordinances.

(5.) The voice that has called us to walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us. It is your badge, and will be your comfort. Let there be no wrath, nor malice, nor evil-speaking, among you.

All this, I am sure, and a great deal more, we are called to by the voice of God in his word and in his providences. Have we obeyed? O repent! Plead Christ's obedience. Now, shall we hear and obey? Shall we renew our covenant this day so to do, in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ? "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God." Ps. lxii. 11. The Psalmist does not say, God spoke twice, and he heard once; but, God spoke once, and he heard twice.

Expect another voice shortly. That will be, either "Come, ye blessed," or, "Go, ye cursed."

SERMON XII*.

ZEPHANIAH iii. 2.
—*She received not correction.*

THIS is the second of the four articles in this charge against Jerusalem, for which a *woe* is here denounced against her by the God of heaven: "She received not correction."

DOCTRINE. Not to receive correction, is a sin of omission, which exposes persons and people to Divine woes.

It is here supposed that they had been corrected; that is, chastened, punished. The rod of God had been upon their back, under which they had smarted. What rod, and when, he doth not tell us; but such a thing had been. They had often been in the furnace, but they did not receive correction, as they should have done. No! Then

* Preached at Broad Oak, August the 9th, 1693, on a Public Fast.

woe to them: it had been better for them they had.

Now this, to us of these nations, at this day, is a word in season. We have been corrected: have we not?—I shall shew you wherein—But have we received correction? Is it not as true of us as it was of Jerusalem, "She received not correction?" It will, I hope, be no hard matter to *convince* us of our guilt as to this matter: and where guilt goes before, the *woe* follows after.

So, also, as to ourselves, in our particular, personal capacity, it will be good for us to know what it is to receive correction; it being every one's lot, one time or other, to be corrected, in one kind or other. It may be with some of us this day a correcting day; and do we receive it?—I say, *receive* it? If not, look for a woe: which there is but one way to prevent, and that is, by speedy repentance.

Shew I. What it is not to receive correction.
II. The evil of it, and why it exposes us to Divine woes.
III. What the particular woes are that follow upon not receiving correction.
IV. Apply the subject.

I beseech you, let me have your attention; and, remember, it is a Fasting Day. You are come

here to arraign yourselves at God's bar; and I am come here to help you, and, among other faults, to mind you of this—not receiving correction; to the end you may bewail it before God to-day, that God, for Christ's sake, may pardon it to us and to our people; that so the woe denounced and deserved may not overtake us.

I. What is it not to receive correction?

The expression, Receiving correction, is somewhat unusual. It signifies, in one sense, to be corrected, to be punished. "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Now if that were the meaning, it were no fault, it would deserve no woe. Not to be corrected is itself a woe.

But to receive correction, is to behave ourselves aright, and as we ought, under correction. It is the same with accepting the punishment. Lev. xxvi. 41. Many are punished that do not accept the punishment. Now what is it not to receive correction?

1. It is not to own the hand of God in our corrections; to look upon them as a chance, coming out of the ground, springing out of the dust.—And do they so? Certainly not. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Job acknowledged God in his afflictions (Job i. 21), and so must we: not in word and tongue only, as

every one will—none will deny it—but in deed and in truth; inwardly, heartily. "And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi; call me Marah: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" The contrary deportment exposes us to a woe. Woe to them that look not at God's hand in their corrections, but at something else! If their hay or corn be spoiled, it was the weather that did it! No! it was God, in and by the weather. It was a chance! as 1 Sam. vi. 9. No!

2. It is not to own the anger of God in our corrections.—It is true, there is such a thing as chastening in love: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Rev. iii. 19. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Heb. xii. 6. And we are bound, if we are children, to comfort ourselves in hope that there may be love at the bottom of our corrections. But, however, there is anger appearing; there are signs and tokens of displeasure. *That* we are to own, to acknowledge, to take notice of, and to be affected with. "O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath; neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of

thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin." When it is otherwise, it is a provocation. Amos iii. 6, 8.

3. It is to own sin to be the procuring cause of our corrections.—It is so, whether we will own it or not. "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law." Isa. xlii. 24. "Because of their iniquities they are afflicted." Ps. cvii. 17. Punishment follows after, only where sin goes before. The blessed martyrs, that endured so much in prisons and in deaths, would say, 'Though it is for Christ's sake that we suffer this, yet our sins deserve it.' And we must all say so, or we do not receive corrections. "If their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant." Lev. xxvi. 41.

4. It is not to justify God in what is brought upon us, and to say, the Lord is righteous. "Thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly." Neh. ix. 33. He doth me no wrong, though he doth afflict me: my sin deserves it. Nay,

5. We do not receive correction if we do not own that there is mercy mixed; that we are

punished *less* than our iniquities have deserved. Ezra ix. 13. It is certainly so while we are out of hell, for every sin deserves God's wrath and curse. To *receive* correction is applied properly to a favour or benefit bestowed. We are to own it so, that we are mercifully dealt with. Few will do this, especially if the correction be sharp, and severe, and extraordinary: such as Job's was, when all was gone. But be it what it will, it ought to be done. As she who had two of her children dead in the house together, said, Blessed be God that they are not all dead. This was *receiving* correction.

6. It is not to murmur, and repine, and complain under corrections; but to be quiet and patient; kissing the rod; being dumb, and not opening the mouth. As David: "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth: because thou didst it." As Aaron: he "held his peace." As the Church: "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." This is *duty* at such a time. "In your patience possess ye your souls." "Let patience have her perfect work." And it is becoming duty; it *ought* to be so: the contrary is a fault. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?"

7. It is not to quarrel with instruments and second causes.—Those that will hold their peace,

it may be, as to God, will think they may have leave to speak against men, and to assail them. No. When Shimei cursed David, and the sons of Zeruiah would have had him beheaded, he would hear no talk of second causes: "The Lord hath said unto him, Curse David." 2 Sam. xvi. 10. Here was receiving correction.

8. It is not to hear the rod, nor him that hath appointed it.—Every rod hath a voice, which voice is to be obeyed. How can it be obeyed, if it be not received? "She obeyed not the voice [of the rod]: she received not correction." If a messenger come to your house on an errand, and you will not so much as receive him, nor open your doors to him; how ill will that be taken! O believe that every correction hath something to say to you; and you must hear and heed what it is, saying, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." what says this rod of thine to thy servant?

9. It is not to be reformed, amended, made better, by corrections.—This is God's design in afflicting,—to bring us nearer to himself. "He chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." Heb. xii. 10. Now when this end is not attained, but we remain as bad as before; as earthly, carnal, sensual, proud, careless, and secure, as before; correction is not received, and there is a woe denounced.

Corrections are compared to a hedge of thorns,

Hos. ii. 6, to stop us in sinful pursuits: and we will not be stopped.

They are compared to a shepherd's dog sent forth to fetch in the stragglers: and we will not be fetched in. "Before I was afflicted, I went astray."

They are compared to a furnace of fire, wherein dirty, drossy metal is melted, in order to the refining of it. "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Isa. xlviii. 10. Now, if we are not refined, but come out as bad as we went in, we do not receive correction.

They are compared to a wind that fans the corn, and cleanses it by separating the chaff, and dust, and filth, from it. "I will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land." Jer. li. 2. Now if we are not cleansed, we do not receive correction.

They are compared to physic, for the cleansing the body of ill humours which distemper it. Now if the physic taken do not operate, the physician will say, it is an ill sign. The general betterment by affliction should be—humbling: making the heart soft—weaning from the world: embittering it to us as wormwood—turning out of sinful ways—and quickening to and in holy duties; especially prayer.

10. It is not to receive correction, when we

are so far from being made better, that we are made worse, by our corrections.—Now with many it is thus. It was so with Ahaz: "In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord." 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. That which should have done him good, did him hurt: he "trespassed yet more." There is nothing more ordinary, than for the hard heart to be made more hard by being in the furnace, and the will more crooked and stubborn. "But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart." Exod. viii. 15, and xix. 32, &c. When it is so within, the life and conversation must needs be accordingly.

II. I am to shew what evil there is in not receiving correction.

1. It is an affront to the Divine Majesty.—You that are parents and masters, judge of God by yourselves in this matter. If you correct a child, or a servant, or a scholar, and he will not receive correction, will not own a fault, will not patiently bear the rod; but reject, and strive, and struggle, and, instead of being mended, is hardened: how do you like this? Can you bear it? Will you suffer it? You will not: your authority is despised by it. Such is the case with God, when we receive not correction.

2. It is a sin against the remedy.—There are

but two outward and ordinary means for the convincing and converting of sinners, and doing good to souls. These are, the word and the rod. Now when the word is not received, O how it provokes! "They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people till there was no remedy." 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. So, likewise, when the rod is not received, God is provoked to anger; a woe is denounced.

3. It is a sign there is no grace, not one grain of true grace.—True grace, where it is, enables a man to get good both by the word and the rod *, and, in order thereunto, to receive them; to receive instruction, to receive correction: though this is not always the case to such a degree as should be, which is seen and bewailed; yet always so as to desire and endeavour it. "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." Micah vi. 9. Therefore, where it is otherwise it is a bad sign.

* "They that forsake their sin, and turn to God, in the time of affliction, are certainly God's people: for the wicked man fretteth and murmureth against God, when a cross cometh, and he cannot abide it. But the godly man is humbled thereby, and it makes him more obedient in all duties unto God."—*Perkins on Heb. XI.* p. 141, *Works*, edition 1618.

III. Shew what the woes are that usually follow upon people's not receiving correction.

They are what God pleases; sometimes one, sometimes another: sometimes in this world, sometimes in the world to come: as God pleases. But in this world, usually one of these two. Either,

1. Some further sharper trials.—If correction will not do, look for destruction: the fire must be heated hotter. Instead of a rod, there must be a sword: a bigger wedge; a heavier blow. How often is it so! When running with the footmen will not tire us in our sinful ways, he sends horsemen for us to run with, to try what they will do. "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee." Ezek. xxiv. 13.—Or,

2. The contrary to this: he corrects them no more; gives them up to their own heart's lusts, to vile affections; he lets them have no disturbance in sinful pursuits, but all smooth and quiet, and fair, and calm.—This is the sorest judgment of all others*. "Why should ye be stricken

* "He that has a *blind* conscience, which sees nothing; a *dead* conscience, which feels nothing; and a *dumb* conscience, which says nothing; is in as miserable a condition as a man can be in on this side hell."—*One of Mr. Henry's Sayings.* See his Life, chap. X.

any more? Ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint." Isa. i. 5. "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Hosea iv. 17. As long as a father hath hope by correction to reclaim his child, so long he corrects him; but then, if that will not do, he casts him off, and disinherits him. "Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it [by affliction:] and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then *after that* thou shalt cut it down." Luke xiii.

IV. The application.

1. In reference to the Public—our own land and nation. Three things are to be inquired into: Have we been corrected? Have we received correction? If not, What is to be done?

(1.) Have we been corrected?

We have. It is manifest we have, both of late and heretofore; and we still are. To look no farther than our own remembrance, divers of us. Was not the long war a correction? Certainly it was, and a very sharp one, both in respect to the sea of blood that was shed, and the mass of treasure that was spent. Was not the Plague and

Fire of London a correction, such as we feel from to this day? Was not the silencing of near two thousand godly ministers in one day by a law, a correction; not to them only, but to the people committed to their charge? What a multitude of souls might they have been a means of bringing to God, in the circumstances wherein they were, in thirty-one years' space, if they had been let alone! Was not the coming in of Popery upon us in 1685 and 1686 like a flood, a correction, a threatening, a scourge? Are we yet, even at this day, without correction? Is not God angry, and are not the tokens of his anger yet upon us? Ask some, and they will tell you they see nothing else. But, blessed be God, we have our *mercies;* and yet we must needs say, we have our miseries. Those words of the Prophet may be ours: "The anger of the Lord is kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: For all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." Isa. v. 25. See also chap. ix. ver. 12, 17, 21; and chap. x. ver. 4. "His hand is stretched out still,"—in a chargeable and bloody war: abroad fightings, at home fears;—in the disasters befallen our merchants trading upon the great waters;—in the reins let loose to profaneness and debauchery;—in restraints continued upon honest men from public employment, civil or military, unless they

will do what is required to be done: which I cannot but look upon as a correction; though such as, I hope, God will turn for good to us in the end;—in the continuance of our divisions among ourselves, which, through mismanagement, are very threatening, and I cannot but call them a correction. As to ourselves, in our own country and neighbourhood, we have been corrected: some years ago, in the dreadful hail we had, whereby whole fields of corn were beaten down and spoiled; and at this time, in the general failure of our fruit-trees yielding no fruit this year, which, I fear, some will feel the want of in the winter season. We have, we have been corrected.

(2.) Have we received correction? Have the various rebukes we have been under done us good? Are we a jot the better for them? Are we not the *worse?* Have we not revolted more and more? I can remember, in the time of the long war, it was commonly said, Oh, if God will be pleased to send peace again, we will never do as we have done. He did send peace: the sword was sheathed again. And what followed? As bad as ever. High and low, rich and poor, bond and free, professor and profane, corrupted their way before God. Then we said, Oh, if we had but our king again, and our ancient government, all would certainly be amended. And was it so? Was it not quite contrary? Were not the flood-

gates opened, and have in a great measure continued so ever since, to wickedness and debaucheries of all sorts? And was this to receive correction? The events in 1665 and 1666 declared that God was highly displeased, and that we were quickly ready for another stroke.

But have we *yet* learned to receive correction? Do our present rebukes better us; are they borne as they should be? Then what mean the murmurings, and repinings, and complainings that we hear? Are there not those that wish themselves in Egypt again; that say, let us get us another captain that will lead us forward? Is this to receive correction?

(3.) If we have not, what is to be done?

There is but one thing to be done:—O England! repent, repent! God in mercy make this present day England's repenting day! as for other things, so in special, that we have not received correction; that so many rods, one after another, have been worn out upon us to so little purpose; that so many terrible judgments have been inflicted—war, plague, fire, and earthquakes in divers places. And who is the better? What one sin the less, what one duty the more performed? O that this might be laid to heart! If not by others, let it be so by us. Let *us* mourn for England's incorrigibleness.

2. As to Ourselves.—Have not we, each of us,

one time or other, been corrected—in body, goods, good name, relations—by pains, sickness, losses, crosses, or disappointments? We have; we have. But have we received correction? Have we owned God the author, sin the cause? Have we justified him, and judged ourselves? Have we been quiet, patient, contented, thankful? Have they made us better? If not, here is matter for humiliation to-day. Oh that we could lie low before the Lord, and repent, as it were, in dust and ashes, over our own incorrigibleness!

To help you herein, let me lay before you,

(1.) A precept.—"Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good? Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens." Lam. iii. 37—42. In these words we have a doctrine, a truth asserted—that all things come to pass by the Divine will and providence (ver. 37, 38). We have also the use to be made thereof by us, which is three-fold: We must not *complain* (ver. 39);—We must *search and try* our ways: we must examine ourselves; inquire what hath been

amiss, and confess and bewail and amend it (ver. 40);—We must lift up our *hearts* with our hands unto God in the heavens (ver. 41): we must pray in good earnest; cry mightily to God for peace and pardon, if so be there may be hope. O pray, pray, that our not receiving correction may not be laid to our charge.

(2.) A pattern: holy Job.—He was certainly corrected, if ever man was. And at first he received correction bravely: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" But afterwards he missed it, in cursing his day; in his discourse with his three friends, reflecting upon God and his providence, as if he had dealt hardly with him. But how came he off at last? how did he finish? Bravely again, that is, *penitently:* "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." So must we; saying, as he did, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further." And what said God unto him, when he was in this frame of mind? "Gird up thy loins now like a man." And for time to come, be exhorted, whenever God corrects, receive correction.

Accept of it, as the punishment of your iniquity. Justify God, judge yourselves: "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

Bear it patiently; without murmuring or complaining. Not sullenly, neither; but submissively: even unto long-suffering.

Be made better by it. It is a great loss to lose an affliction.

SERMON XIII.*

ZEPHANIAH iii. 2.
—She trusted not in the Lord.

THIS is the third thing which is here laid to Jerusalem's charge, and for which a woe is denounced against her.

DOCTRINE. That not trusting in the Lord is an omission, which exposes people to Divine woes. "Woe unto her: she trusted not in the Lord."

Now the query will be, whether, in this article of indictment, we of this nation, we of this congregation, are concerned, at this day; that, if we be, we may arraign ourselves before God, and repent, and take shame to ourselves after a godly sort: and do so no more—else expect a Divine woe.

* Preached at Broad Oak on a Fast Day, September the 13th, 1693.

Shew I. What it is not to trust in the Lord.
II. What evil there is in it.
III. Apply it.

I. What is it not to trust in the Lord?

Let me tell you what it *is* to trust in the Lord, and by that you will know what it is *not* to trust in him.

To trust in the Lord, is to believe and hope in him, in all our concerns, both public and private; for this, and for another world. Then, not to trust in the Lord, is not to believe, not to hope in him, in all our concerns. It is said, Hab. ii. 4, "The just shall live by his faith." Then, not to trust in the Lord, is not to live by faith.

The Scripture expresses it several ways.

1. By resting in the Lord. "Rest in the Lord"—or, according to the Hebrew, *be silent* to the Lord. Ps. xxxvii. 7.—How seldom can we find in our hearts to be so! We have always something to say, something to object against his providential dispensations.

2. By relying upon the Lord.—"The children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers." 2 Chron. xiii. 18. "Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy

God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host? yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand." 2 Chron. xvi. 7, 8. Trust is the recumbency of the soul upon God, expecting patiently what his good pleasure is concerning us.

3. By casting our burden, our care, upon the Lord.—"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." Ps. lv. 22. Compare this with 1 Pet. v. 7, "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." Ἐπιρίψαντες—*away with it*, from thyself to him. He is willing to receive it.

4. By committing our way and our works unto him.—"Commit thy way unto the Lord." Ps. xxxvii. 5. "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established." Prov. xvi. 3. According to the Hebrew, *roll thy way* upon the Lord. "Trust also in him," that is, refer all thy matters to him freely, fully, and unreservedly. Let him do with thee as seemeth good in his eyes.

5. By flying to him for refuge.—"In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" Ps. xi. 1. "O God, my soul trusteth in thee; yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge." Ps. lvii. 1. "We have a strong consolation, who have fled for

refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb. vi. 18. As Joab, to the horns of the altar, trusting to find safety there.

6. By fastening on him; taking hold of his arm, and on his strength.—"Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me." Isa. xxvii. 5.—And when we have taken hold, keeping our hold. "Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant: but Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we, if we *hold fast* the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Not suffering ourselves to be beaten from it. As the soldier, who, when shipwrecked, clung to the beak of the ship, first with one arm, then with the other, and then with his teeth. Here was trust. As Jacob: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

Not to trust, is not to rest, not to rely, not to cast our burden, upon the Lord. It is not to commit our way to him; not to fly to him for refuge, nor to take hold of his strength.

II. Shew the *evil* there is in not trusting in the Lord.

'Do we sin if we do not trust in the Lord?' Yes: because trusting is duty; and to omit duty is sin. That which makes duty is the command of God. He hath bidden us trust in him. "Trust in him at all times," whatever times

pass over us. Trust in him not only for time, but "trust ye in the Lord for ever."

It is part of that inward natural worship which is required of us in the First Commandment. In him whom we have for our God, in him must we trust; on him we must rely. As we should love him, fear him, and believe him, so we must hope and trust in him. If we do not, then we are certainly transgressors of the first and great commandment. Therefore, not to trust in the Lord, is a great transgression, whatever we may think of it.

There is,

1. The evil of guilt in it: it brings great guilt upon the soul;

(1.) In respect of God, by the wrong it doth to him.

It *provokes* him.—"And they sinned yet more against him, by provoking the Most High in the wilderness." Ps. lxxviii. 17. "They said, *Can* God furnish a table in the wilderness?" ver. 19. That was the provocation—"*Can God?*" It would provoke any of you, when those you deal with will not trust you, will not take your word.

It *grieves* him.—"Forty years long was I grieved with this generation." Ps. xcv. 10 Though God had promised that he would bring them to Canaan, they would not believe it. "How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!"

It *tempts* him.—" Yea, they turned back and tempted God." Ps. lxxviii. 41. " They tempted God in their heart, by asking meat for their lust." ver. 18. It puts him out of his road of common providences; upon doing that which he did not think to have done. " All those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice." Numb. xiv. 22.

It *limits* him.—" They limited the Holy One of Israel." Ps. lxxviii. 41.—It limits him as to *time*. " He that believeth shall not make haste." Therefore, he that makes haste does not believe. When we must have deliverance and settlement in our own time, just when we will, we limit God as to time; we make haste; we do not believe.—It limits him as to *means*. The language is; *This* must be the instrument, and no other. *Moses* must bring us into Canaan.

It *shames* him.—It brings an ill report upon him before men. It robs him of his good name. 'Am I not to be trusted? What am I? What do you make of me?' It is said of Abraham, he gave *glory* to God by believing. Rom. iv. 20. Therefore, unbelief deprives him of his glory.

(2.) In respect of ourselves, by the wrong it doth to our own souls.

It hinders our peace.—It is the troubler of that,

the bane of that. Now peace is a precious jewel: therefore, whatever hinders our peace is a wrong to ourselves. To have a quiet, composed frame of spirit, under all events; neither cast down with grief under evils present, nor with fear of what is to come; how sweet, how comfortable! This can never be but by trusting in the Lord. "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." Ps. cxii. 7. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." Isa. xxvi. 3. Where that is not, see the posture of the soul: "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind." Isa. vii. 1, 2.

It is a bar to the success of prayer. It hinders that.—"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think

that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." What we ask doubtingly, distrustingly, it were as good we did not ask at all.

It is at the bottom of all our sinful departures from God.—" Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Heb. iii. 12.—There is a two-fold departing from God. The one is temporal and partial. Every wilful sin is a departure from God; and what causes wilful sin, but distrust of God? We do not believe him all-sufficient for us, and therefore seek out to the creature for satisfaction, delight, and pleasure. What made Abraham deny his wife, David his reason, and Peter his Master, but distrust?—The other is a total and final departure from God. " Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

(3.) In respect of others.—It is a blemish to our profession: it brings an evil report upon the ways of God, as the evil spies did upon the promised land.

2. There is the evil of punishment in it. It exposes to Divine woes. Woe to the distrustful!

(1.) They that will not trust in the Lord shall not be established (Isa. vii. 9)—neither within

nor without; neither in their minds nor in their affairs.

(2.) They shall bring nothing to pass: nothing that they do shall prosper. The reason is, they are out of the promise. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Ps. xxxvii. 5. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Prov. iii. 5, 6.

(3.) Whatever else they trust to shall deceive and disappoint them. "Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited." Jer. xvii. 5, 6. They shall be ashamed of it: "Thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria. For the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them." Jer. ii. 36, 37.

(4.) It brings eternal ruin and destruction.—Unbelief is the great damning sin of the world. "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John iii. 36; viii. 24; Mark xvi. 16.

III. The application.

1. Let me apply this in reference to our public concerns: the affairs of this land and nation at this day.

Have we trusted in the Lord? *Do* we trust in the Lord? Do our rulers; do our people? Are there not other things that we trust to *more* than God—to men and means, and instruments, and second causes; to armies, and navies, and confederates? Are we not saying, We have so many thousand foot, and so many regiments of horse, and so many capital ships; and how then can we miscarry?—It seems we may miscarry notwithstanding; nay, it is just with God we should. The Lord give repentance to England upon this day of fasting and humiliation, that we may be found mourning over our carnal confidences, and carnal diffidence; our trusting in creatures, and our *not* trusting in God!

Who knows but it may be the provoking sin that cries loudest against us? We complain, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jer. xviii. 20. And what is the matter? we trust not in the Lord. Till this matter be mended, never expect it should be otherwise—never, till we take up David's resolution: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God." Ps. xx. 7. It is said of Heze-

kiah, who undertook a work of reformation both in church and state, when things were at a worse pass, at a lower ebb, than they are with us now, his discouragements more and greater, "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel." 2 Kings xviii. 5. He took Him along with him; relied upon His arm: and it prospered in his hand. So should it be with us in all our concerns. It is a sad time with our Protestant neighbours in France; we ourselves are threatened at home; but if we trust in the Lord, he will yet appear for us. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever."

2. Let us apply it to ourselves.

Have we not, each of us, cause to be humbled, that we have not trusted in the Lord, as to our own personal concerns, temporal and spiritual? And shall we learn to do it for time to come?

As to spiritual concerns—We have reason to repent to-day, that we were so long ere we would be prevailed with to trust God with our souls, in and through Jesus Christ, in the Gospel way of believing; ere we would give over trusting to our own merit and righteousness for justification and salvation. It is well if we have yet given over, notwithstanding all our convictions about it. "We worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. iii. 3. "What things were gain to me," said

Paul, "those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." ver. 7, 8. Paul should be a copy for us to write after. None but Christ! none but Christ! Let us not be as those who, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

As to temporal things—in the things of this life.—It is our every-day's fault, that we trust not in the Lord. Though there is all the reason in the world why we should do it, yet we do it not. Our own hearts know we do not, and if "they condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." There is every reason why we should trust in the Lord.

(1.) He hath bidden us, over and over again, put our trust in him; cast our care upon him. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." And yet we will not. Had some great man said but half so much to us, we should have acted accordingly.

(2.) He hath given us promise upon promise, suited to every strait. Have we need of guidance, a blessing, success, preservation, or supply?

He hath told us, again and again, to come to him, and trust in him, and we shall have it.

(3.) He is faithful and true; and can as soon deny himself, as not perform what he hath promised. Titus i. 1; Heb. vi. 18; 1 Thess. v. 24. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or, hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Numb. xxiii. 19. And yet will we not trust him.

(4.) He hath infinite wisdom, power, and goodness to invite our trust in him.—He hath wisdom to know what is best, and to contrive and order things accordingly.—He hath power to do what he will do for us: his arm is a mighty arm. "Abraham staggered not at the promise through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."—He hath goodness and mercy to incline his will. He is a God of compassions. "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." This we doubt most of. As the leper; "Lord, *if thou wilt*, thou canst make me clean." He will, if *good* for us.

(5.) He hath put himself into the nearest and dearest covenant relations to do it: as Friend, Father, Husband.—How safely doth the heart of one friend trust in another! How securely doth

the child trust in the father! God is a living Friend, an everlasting Father. "Trust in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

(6.) What repeated experiences have we had—our own and other's—that when we *have* trusted in him he hath not failed us.—This should have been (and shall it be?) an argument with us against our base distrust. "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded." Ps. xxii. 4, 5. Ps. xxxiv. 4, 5, 6; xliv. 1, &c.; Luke xxii. 35; Matt. vi. 26, &c. Sometimes we are taught to argue from the lesser to the greater: "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" Matt. vi. 25. Sometimes from the greater to the lesser: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. Sometimes from what is past to what is present, and to come: "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." 2 Cor. i. 10. 1 Sam. xvii. 37. Sometimes from what is to come to what is present: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke xii. 32. John xiv. 1, 2. All this should encourage our trust in God. The oftener we have experienced his good-

ness, the more aggravated is our guilt when we distrust him: "And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice." 1 Kings xi. 9.

(7.) How likely it is we should be deceived by any thing else, whatever it be, that we trust to, instead of God, whether it be a person or a thing.—Some trust in their own hearts: "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Prov. xxviii. 26. They are fools, because the heart is deceitful. Jer. xvii. 9. They, therefore, who trust in a deceitful heart, have no wit, no wisdom, no understanding. We are cautioned against it: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to thine own understanding." Prov. iii. 5. Strength of parts, for duty, praying, or preaching, trusted in, proves weakness.

Some trust in their great friends and relations. "Cease ye from man." Isa. ii. 22. "Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him." Isa. xxxvi. 6. Micah vii. 5.

Some trust in worldly riches and possessions: "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as a high wall in his own conceit." Prov. xviii. 11. Ps. lii. 7, 8. But we should remember they are uncertain: 1 Tim. vi. 17. "Wilt thou set thine

eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away, as an eagle toward heaven." Prov. xxiii. 5. Luke xii. 19, &c.

Shall these things convince and humble us? Shall we resolve henceforward, by God's grace, to trust *him* more, and creatures less?

I will close with a few directions about trusting in God, that we may not be presumptuous in our trust.

1. Our trust must be in God *only*, in and through Jesus Christ as Mediator; "for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen." Out of him, he is a consuming fire.

2. Our trust must not be absolute when it should be with a proviso—as when we seek things temporal. Nor should it be with a proviso when it should be absolute—as when we seek mercy and grace.

3. Our trust must be in the way of our duty, else it is in vain to expect any thing from him. "Trust in the Lord, and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Yet how many trust for even heaven itself, though they are going on in wicked ways! It requires strong faith indeed, to trust in God when all is dark.

4. Our trust must be in the use of means. Otherwise, we tempt God: when we expect a crop without sowing; health out of sickness, when

no means are used. " Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover." Isa. xxxviii. 21.

5. Our trust must be accompanied with prayer. " Trust in him at all times: ye people, pour out your hearts before him." Ps. lxii. 8. Phil. iv. 6. It is a good argument in prayer—Lord, I trust in thee for such or such a mercy. " In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed." Ps. xxxi. 1. " In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion." Ps. lxxi. 1.

6. Our trust must be such as that we are willing to wait God's time. We must not make haste, lest more than good speed. " It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Lam. iii. 26. Isa. xxviii. 16. See also Ps. lxii. 1, 5: " Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him."

SERMON XIV.

MATT. v. 3.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

THESE are the first words of the first solemn sermon that was preached by our Lord Jesus. We have the text of one before: "Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. iv. 17. But this is the first printed sermon—the first thought fit to be left upon record. And as the first, so it is the longest; consisting of three chapters. The truth is, the subject was wide and large. It is an exposition of the Commandments and Lord's Prayer, and several other weighty matters; containing, in effect, the whole duty of man.

He begins with "*Blessed.*" This was the first word. His errand into the world was to bless the world. "God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Acts iii. 26.

David begins his Psalms so. The *end* is first in intention: we must be fixed upon that. Would we be blessed? Here is the way prescribed. The first step is poverty of spirit. "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

'Where was he when he preached this sermon?' He went up into a *mountain*. It was a field-meeting, being of late so much persecuted. In a mountain the law was given: that was Mount Sinai, full of terror. In a mount also it was expounded, with no terror, but with all possible sweetness. Blessed! Blessed!

'Who were his auditors?' The multitude, and his disciples. It was a mixed auditory: neither all good nor all bad; neither all converted nor all unconverted. Such *we* preach to. To each of them he had something to say: so have *we*.

'What means the expression, He opened his mouth, and taught them?' He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. God had given him a mouth; grace was poured into his lips; and he used the mouth and grace he had. So should ministers. It is a double gift to have a mouth, and to have a heart to open it: to have parts, gifts, strength, and abilities. This is promised as a mercy. "In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the

Lord." Ezek. xxix. 21.—But for the words themselves, to detain you no longer in the preface. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

DOCTRINE. The poor in spirit are a blessed people, and heaven is theirs.

Shew I. What this poverty of spirit is, and who the poor in spirit are.

II. Wherein consists their present blessedness.

III. What there is in it, that heaven is theirs.

IV. The application.

I. Who are the poor in spirit.

There are two kinds of poor. There are the poor in *estate:* those that have little or nothing of this world's goods; little money, house, or land—it may be none at all: as poor as Job, when upon the dunghill, stripped of all his possessions and all his comforts. There are many poor.

There are the poor in *spirit.* This relates to the inward, not to the outward man. There are such as are poor in estate, and are contentedly so; submitting therein to the good will and pleasure of their heavenly Father, and bearing it patiently, without murmuring, repining, or complain-

ing—not even desiring to be rich. This is an excellent frame. They are truly blessed that are of it upon right grounds. They are truly blessed to whom God hath given Christian patience, patience upon a right principle: and God will reward them for it in his heavenly kingdom.

There are such as, though rich in worldly estate, yet in respect of their inward frame are meek and humble, lowly and contrite; whose heart is a broken heart; whose spirit is a tender spirit. It is one thing to be poor in spirituals, and another thing to be poor in spirit.

There are multitudes that are poor in spirituals: that have no grace, no repentance, no faith, no love, no heavenly-mindedness, no knowledge, no wisdom —or next to none. The case of such is sad, not blessed. "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Rev. iii. 17. "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing." Prov. xiii. 7. O see that it be so with none of you! especially you that are poor in the world. "Hearken, my beloved brethren; hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

To be poor in spirit is another thing. I shall give you their character in four particulars. Will

you try yourselves as I go along, and see whether you are such as are poor in spirit? Our Lord, according to Luke, applies it to his disciples: "And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God." Luke vi. 20. O that I could say in like manner to all and each of you, Blessed are *ye* poor, *thou* poor in spirit!

1. Such as are poor in spirit, have had a due sight and sense of sin, and are truly contrite in soul for it.

Is it so with you? Have you seen sin, your own sin, in the bitterness of it? Have you felt from it accordingly in the bitterness of godly sorrow? Then you are poor in spirit. This godly sorrow, this poverty of spirit, is described by being pricked in the heart: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts ii. 37. Observe, the description is different from what is related in Acts vii. 54: "When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." True poverty of spirit is joined with contrition: "To this man," says Jehovah, "will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isa. lxvi. 2. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Ps. li. 17.

2. Such as are poor in spirit have seen God in his greatness and glory, in his holiness and purity, and are truly humbled and laid low by it.

See this illustrated in the case of Job: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Moses is an eminent example: "And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him, and said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." Exodus iii. Isaiah's experience is a further illustration. After he had seen in vision "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," and witnessed the adoring worship of the seraphim, he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Isa. vi. Whatever other considerations we have had towards pulling down our pride and haughtiness, except there have been this, our humility is not kindly *.

* "The deepest and most pure humility doth not so much arise from the consideration of our own faults and defects as from a calm and quiet contemplation of the Divine

3. Such as are poor in spirit, have mean thoughts of themselves; and carry it accordingly, both towards God and towards man.

It is in our nature to value ourselves, and mostly to *over-value* ourselves, to think much better of ourselves than we ought. It is a difficult thing to be brought off this. But when Grace comes, the case is altered. Then the confession is, "So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast

purity and goodness. Our spots never appear so clearly as when we place them before this Infinite Light; and we never seem less in our own eyes than when we look down upon ourselves from on high. The sense which humble souls have of the Divine Perfections, makes them think very meanly of any thing they have hitherto attained, and be still endeavouring to surmount themselves, and make nearer approaches to those infinite excellencies which they admire."

"As the chief exercises of humility are those which relate unto Almighty God, so they are accompanied with the greatest satisfaction and sweetness. It is impossible to express the great pleasure and delight which religious persons feel in the lowest prostrations of their soul before God; when, having a deep sense of the Divine majesty and glory, they sink (if I may so speak) to the bottom of their beings, and vanish and disappear in the presence of God, by a serious and affectionate acknowledgment of their own nothingness, and the shortness and imperfections of their attainments; when they understand the full sense and emphasis of the Psalmist's exclamation, *Lord, what is man?* and can utter it with the same affection."—Such are the sentiments of the refined and pious Scougal. See his "*Life of God in the Soul of Man*," published by Bishop Burnet; a book which exhibits a beautiful specimen of devotional elegance.

before thee." Ps. lxxiii. 22. "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man." Prov. xxx. 2. Now where it is thus within, like light or fire, it will not, it cannot, be hid.

It will be manifest in our carriage towards God. —There will be thankfulness for the least mercy. 'It is better than I deserve, it is too good for me,' will be the language of the poor in spirit. As Jacob: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant." Gen. xxxii. 10. Such will say, with the church of old, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." Lam. iii. 22. There will be quietness and submission also under the sharpest trials: "I will bear," will such say, "the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." Micah vii. 9. If we are poor in spirit, we shall discover reverence and godly fear in all our addresses at a Throne of Grace. This was the case with Abraham: see Gen. xviii. So also with the Publican: "And the Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner."

It will be manifest, likewise, in our deportment towards men.—If we are poor in spirit, we shall prefer others in honour above ourselves, both in word and deed. We shall condescend to mean things, when we may do the least good by so doing: our Saviour washed the disciples' feet. We shall slight and despise the slights which others put upon us. Our Lord did so: "for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, and despised the shame." So did David: observe his answer to the taunts of Michal: "I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight." 2 Sam. vi. 22.

The contrary to this poorness, is pride and haughtiness of spirit; a sin that reigns in some, that *remains* in all. The sweet Psalmist of Israel was guilty of this: "And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. It is said of Hezekiah, he "humbled himself for the pride of his heart." 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. Observe, he was *humbled* for it: so was David.

4. Such as are poor in spirit, discover a trembling frame under God's word. Isa. lxvi. 2.

They feel a holy reverence in the reading and hearing of it. They remember that *God* speaks.

Eglon, king of Moab, shewed this reverence when "Ehud came unto him: and he was sitting in a summer-parlour, which he had made for himself, alone: and Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat." Judges iii. 20. The Emperor Constantine * would never sit at sermon. King Edward the Sixth would not tread on the Bible †.

They are suitably wrought upon by it, so as to fear the threatenings and tremble at the execu-

* Constantine the Great died at Nicomedia, May 22d, A.D. 337, aged 66. Eusebius wrote much concerning him, and his testimony deserves observation. "His vacant time," says that accurate historian, "he spent in prayer, reading the Scriptures, and other divine exercises and employments; and he formed his whole court after his example. So illustrious a piety God was pleased to reward with the enlargement of his empire, and the prosperity of his family, besides those eminent blessings which were reserved for his posterity."—*Orat. de Laud. Const.* c. IX. p. 628. For an interesting account of Constantine, with a view of the state of Paganism during his reign, see Cave's Ecclesiastici, edition 1683, Introd. p. 1, &c.; Dr. Lardner's Works, vol. IV. p. 138, edition 1788; and Gibbon's Roman Empire, vols. II. and III.

† This interesting circumstance is thus recorded by the Rev. David Simpson. "Upon a certain occasion, a paper that was called for in his Council-chamber happened to lie out of reach; the person concerned to produce it, took a Bible that lay by, and, standing upon it, reached down the paper. The King, observing what was done, ran himself to the place, and, taking the Bible in his hands, kissed it, and laid it up again."—*Sacred Literature*, vol. II. p. 414.

tions the Sacred Word records. " And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes." 2 Kings xxii. 10, 11. Such was the conduct of the pious Josiah, king of Judah. See the difference between himself and his son Jehoiakim. That monarch caused the word of the Lord to be consumed in fire: see Jeremiah xxxvi. " Therefore thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost: and I will punish him, and his seed, and his servants, for their iniquity." ver. 30, 31.

II. Prove their present blessedness. They *are* blessed.

'What blessedness is theirs? Can a man that is poor be a blessed man?' Yes, certainly. He may be poor in the world, and notwithstanding that be a blessed man. The poor in spirit are blessed—I say, they *are* blessed.

1. There is the blessedness of evidence in it, as it is a certain proof, sign, and companion of true grace.

He that is poor in spirit, as I have described him, is certainly a godly man: the good work is begun in him: he is passed from death to life.

And is it not a blessed thing to know it to be so; to know that I am a new creature? What would many a doubting soul give if it had it; that this were clear to him!—Get to be poor in spirit, and that will clear it.

2. There is the blessedness of comfort in it.

God will be sure to look to him. "To this man," saith the Lord, "will I *look*, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit."—Is not he blessed whom God looks to?

He will look towards him, as towards a sight that pleases him. They are the desire of his eyes. He overlooks all the beauties and glories of heaven and earth, to look at him who is poor in spirit. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." He seeks such in the congregation; and if he find but one, he regards him with approbation and delight.

He will look after him. He will take care of him, and suffer no man to wrong him. "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Matt. xviii. 6. They are here described as *little* ones—poor in spirit. "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall

be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." Zeph. ii. 3. Such shall be hid.

3. There is the blessedness of supply in it.

What they have need of they shall have from him. He will provide for them. "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away." Luke i. 53. Hungry there, is opposed to rich. "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." Psalm cvii. 9. "I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul." Jer. xxxi. 25. He filleth the hungry, that is, the poor, with good things: such things as they most need, and most desire to have. He supplies the hungry with food, the wounded with healing, the condemned with a pardon. The rich get nothing at his door —no alms. It is only poor people, only those who are poor in spirit, whose wants he supplies.

III. What is there in it, that heaven is theirs?

"Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It is theirs in reversion; it is entailed upon them, made over to them, by a special deed of entail. Whenever they fail, that is, die, they shall be sure of it. This is certainly intended not only for the comfort of such as are thus poor, but for encouragement to all to labour after it. This poverty of spirit brings heaven, the kingdom of heaven, for a sure recompence of reward.

1. Now, in this reward there is suitableness.

To the weary it is promised under the notion of rest; to those that love pleasure, as a paradise: so to the poor, under the notion of a kingdom. —Comfort thyself, thou poor-spirited Christian! thou art heir to a kingdom. Thou shalt be rich enough shortly: thy inheritance will make thee so. "Hearken, my beloved brethren; hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" James ii. 5. It was Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, that they might know what was the hope of their calling, and what the riches of the glory of the *inheritance* of the saints. Ephes. i. 18.

2. In this reward there is sufficiency.

It is not an earthly, but a heavenly kingdom; between which there is no comparison. Heaven is a happiness that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of its glory. To be there, is to be freed from all evil, and to be supplied with all desirable good. It is to see God, and to enjoy him. It is to be in Abraham's bosom. It is to sit down with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, in the kingdom of God. It is to be with Jesus. It is not only to be with the saints, and with none but saints, but it is to be with the King of saints. And for how long? — for ever and ever. After millions

of millions of ages, heaven will be still heaven. The joy will be eternally fresh. The last of glory will be glory.

IV. The Application.

1. Let us mix faith with this saying, with this first saying of our Lord Jesus in this his first sermon. If we do not, it will not profit us.—'But is it not an unlikely thing that these poor-spirited people, whom all men despise, and trample upon, should be so honoured of God?' Likely or unlikely, Jesus Christ hath said it is so, and we are bound to believe it *.

* This may not be an unfit place to introduce a few sentences from a work entitled "A View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion," by Soame Jenyns, Esq. They present to us a correct view of Christian doctrine, with its general reception among mankind, and also illustrate and confirm Mr. Henry's observation.

"By *poorness of spirit* is to be understood a disposition of mind meek, humble, submissive to power, void of ambition, patient of injuries, and free from all resentment. This was so new and so opposite to the ideas of all pagan moralists, that they thought this temper of mind a criminal and contemptible meanness, which must induce men to sacrifice the glory of their country, and their own honour, to a shameful pusillanimity: and such it appears to almost all who are *called* Christians even at this day; who not only reject it in practice, but disavow it in principle, notwithstanding the explicit declaration of their Master. We see them revenging the smallest affronts by premeditated murder, as individuals, on principles of honour; and, in their national capacities, destroying each other with fire and

2. Let the fruit of that faith be serious desires and endeavours that we may be such.—Would ye be blessed? Then be poor in spirit. Would you have heaven yours? Then be poor in spirit.

'What is to be done?' Beg it earnestly of God. It must be the work of his Spirit and grace in us; and it is expressly promised in the new covenant, under the notion of a heart of flesh, in opposition to a heart of stone: "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Stone is cold, heavy, dry: flesh is the reverse.

'What is to be done?' Look often at God and thyself. Consider what he is, and what a worm thou art. He is *all:* thou art nothing. There is nothing like this to humble us, and to lay us low.

'What is to be done?' Acquaint thyself with

sword for the low considerations of commercial interests, the balance of rival powers, or the ambition of princes: we see them with their last breath animating each other to a savage revenge, and, in the agonies of death, plunging with feeble arms their daggers into the hearts of their opponents; and, what is still worse, we hear all these barbarisms celebrated by historians, flattered by poets, applauded in theatres, approved in senates, and even sanctified in pulpits. But universal practice cannot alter the nature of things, nor universal error change the nature of truth."—*Soame Jenyns's Works,* vol. IV. p. 43.

the way of the Gospel. There are two things in the way of the Gospel which are greatly impoverishing, which conduce much towards poverty of spirit.

The one is—That there we have all carried on, from first to last, in a way of free grace, exclusive of all merit and worthiness in us. Free grace chose us, redeemed us, calls us, justifies, saves us. Should we not, then, be humble and low, and poor in our own eyes? "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." 1 Cor. i. Consider what vile wretches God hath made saints—Paul—the Corinthians. "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor. vi. 11.

The other is—That there we have the most glorious pattern and example of poverty of spirit, of humility and self-denial, set before us, that ever the sun saw, in the blessed Jesus. Thus he addresses us: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. xi. 29. See also John xiii. 4—18. Especially view the

Redeemer in his suffering and dying. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born." Zech. xii. 10. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich"—rich in spirituals, but poor in spirit.

3. Then it follows, by the rule of contraries, that those persons who are proud in spirit are not blessed. Theirs, certainly, is *not* the kingdom of heaven.

Will God look to such? No; he beholds them afar off: "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off." Ps. cxxxviii. 6. Will God provide for them? No: he sends such empty away. Luke i. 53. Will he comfort them? No: he resists them, and sets himself in battle-array against them. James iv. 6. Nay, see Job. xl. 9—12. Oh then, see that none of you be such. Humble, humble yourselves under his mighty hand. Say; Lord, I am a poor worm; mean as a creature, vile as a sinner. Cast thyself down at his feet. Cry, as the poor Publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." It was the Publican, not the proud Pharisee, that went away justified.

'But is not this poorness of spirit contrary to that greatness and height of spirit that is so much commended to and in the saints?' "The Lord plentifully rewardeth the proud doer," or the *magnificent* doer. Ps. xxxi. 23. Such a spirit as was in the three worthies mentioned in the book of Daniel. Such as was in Paul—trampling upon the world, the smiles and the frowns of it; not valuing even life itself. "Should such a man as I am flee?" Neh. vi. 11.

That and this will very well consist. There is no inconsistency in saying; I can do nothing of myself, therefore I am poor, and low, and humble; but I can do all things through Christ strengthening me, therefore I am bold, and venturous, and daring in the way of my duty. None were more humble than Paul, though none were more bold. "*Nos cætera humiliores omnibus hominibus sumus, ubi vero de fide et Christi pietate agitur minime timidi aut humiles apparemus—As to some things, we are more humble than all men; but when there is a contest concerning Christian faith and piety, we do not appear timid or abject.*"—Nazianzen*.

* This illustrious Father, Gregory Nazianzen, Bishop of Constantinople, was born at Arianzum, in Cappadocia, A. D. 324, and is famed both for piety and eloquence. He died, according to St. Jerom, A. D. 389. Rufinus testifies, that "he was in all things an incomparable person; eminent both for his doctrine and his life; the greatest

4. Then let the poor in spirit be comforted. This text is a cordial to such: lay it up accordingly. Thou art blessed, and thou shalt be blessed. Heaven is thine, and it shall be thine. God looks to thee: go thou on, and look to him with a single eye in all thy ways. Seek not thine own things, but *his* things, and thou shalt not repent it.

light of the Church; who taught what he practised, and practised what he taught."—See his Life at large, in Cave's *Ecclesiastici*, p. 272, &c.

SERMON XV.*

2 COR. iv. 7.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

IT is not long since I was here, bearing my testimony to a worthy member of this society, Mr. WILLIAM LAWRENCE. I am called now to do the same to Mr. SAMUEL TAYLOR, your worthy minister. I have often observed, that, when death comes into a society, into a family, or into a neighbourhood, he seldom strikes single strokes, but double, or treble. It may be, because the former is not heard; is not improved. As our dulness must have line upon line, precept upon precept; so also we need death upon death, and funeral upon funeral. The last spoke to *you* —

* Preached at Wem, in Shropshire, June 28th, 1695, on occasion of the death of the Rev. Samuel Taylor, who was ejected by the Act of Uniformity from Edstaston Chapel, near Wem, August 24, 1662. — See the *Nonconf. Mem.* vol. III. p. 146, third edition.

the people, the sheep: this speaks to *us*—the ministers, the shepherds. God would have both you and us to know our frame; to remember we are but dust; or, in the language of the text, to remember that we have the treasure in *earthen vessels*. By the treasure, is meant the Gospel—called the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"—which we have "in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

DOCTRINE I. That the Gospel is a treasure; and they that have it, have a *treasure* in having it. But,

II. They that have the treasure of the Gospel, have it in earthen vessels.

III. The reason why the precious treasure of the Gospel is put in earthen vessels is, that the "excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

These are the three doctrines to be explained and applied.

I. The Gospel is a *treasure;* and they that have it, have a treasure in having it.

In one Scripture, Jesus Christ is spoken of as the treasure, and the Gospel as the field in which the treasure is hid: "The kingdom of heaven

is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Matt. xiii. 44. Here, the Gospel is the treasure, as it holds forth the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The glory of God, in his glorious attributes and perfections of wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, is manifested to us in "the face of Jesus Christ." He came from heaven on purpose to tell the world what a God he is. He hath declared him to us. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." John i. 18. He declared him not by word of mouth, so much as by what he was, and did.

Now we may behold him, as we do the brightness and glory of the sun in a basin of water. He is now Immanuel, God with us, God clothed with a body. And this was the mystery hid, but now it is made manifest in the Gospel: "even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." The Gospel, as it makes this manifest, is a treasure.

Treasure, signifies abundance of precious and useful things. Such things there are in the Gospel. There are precious and useful truths, rules,

doctrines, promises, parables, and histories. And there are abundance of them—more than can be numbered. They are blessed that have them: "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." Ps. lxxxix. 15. Here is an allusion to the jubilee trumpet proclaiming a release from debts, liberty from bondage. "And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."—How blessed? Not those that see to read them with their bodily eyes, or hear them read or preached with their bodily ears, *merely*—though that be a mercy, and they are comparatively blessed that have it;—but blessed, truly blessed, eternally blessed are they into whose *hearts* God hath shined, to give them there this light of the knowledge of his own glory in the face of Jesus Christ. They have treasure indeed! such treasure as makes them rich towards God. No matter though you are poor in the world, if you are thus rich.

II. The Gospel treasure is in earthen vessels.

This expression may allude to those who have occasion to hide their treasure, if it be gold or

silver. They do not put it loose in the earth, but in an earthen pitcher, and so hide it. Thus Almighty God puts the treasure of the Gospel into earthen vessels. But surely it is not to *conceal* it, though it may be to *secure* it: as hiding is taken Matt. xiii. 44; and as God's people are called his *hidden* ones, that is, secured ones; hid under the hollow of God's hand: "They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consult against thy hidden ones." Psalm lxxxiii. 3. Therefore,

I suppose it may allude also to what is recorded in the book of Judges, vii. 16—19: "And he divided the three hundred men into three companies; and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise; and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be, that as I do, so shall ye do. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of the camp, and say, The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Now here are the lamps—"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Here are also the earthen pitchers—earthen vessels. And as Gideon by *those* obtained a great victory over the Midianites, so God by *these* obtains a great victory over the devil, the world, and the flesh.

I shall shew who or what is meant by these earthen vessels that have this treasure.

1. Every godly man that hath it, in the saving benefits of it, is at best but an earthen vessel.—He is so as a *man*. He is of the dust, and returns to the dust again. Job iv. 19. It is strange that God should take such lumps of dust, and make them members of Christ, vessels of his grace and of his glory.—He is so as a *sinful* man. He is worse than dust, for he is polluted, defiled, depraved. 'What! will God make a *saint* of such?' Yes, even of such—such as were the *worst* of men. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor. vi. 11. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy." 1 Tim. i. 12, 13. Perhaps it was our own case.

2. Apply it to ministers, whose office it is to hold forth this light to others.—As the candlesticks set upon the table, they are entrusted with the dispensing of the glad tidings of salvation. But they are *earthen* vessels.

They are so in respect of their meanness.—They are oftentimes of mean pedigree and parentage, poor and low in the world. Of mean pre-

sence and personage. Paul was so: "his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible." So many others. Moses for instance: "And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." Exod. iv. 10.—Ministers are often of mean parts and abilities as to secular learning, compared with the learned men and great scholars of the world. The prophet Amos, an Old Testament preacher, was a herdsman, or cow-keeper: "Amos said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit." Amos vii. 14. Peter and Andrew, and James and John, were fishermen. No matter for that; "I have made you fishers of men." "Ye see your calling"—(that is, who they are by whom you were called. Clark)—"how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." 1 Cor. i. 26, &c. Such were they that called you.

Sometimes it is otherwise; but that it should be purposely designed and endeavoured, as the likeliest means to establish the church (as we have known it), to prefer young noblemen to the ministry, fit or unfit, I could never understand.

Ministers are earthen vessels in respect also of their mortality.—Ministers are of the same metal, and mold, and make, with other men: not other men of earth and clay, and they of brass and iron: no. Are you sick and dying? so are we. Is your breath in your nostrils? so is ours. Have you no continuing city in this world? such is our condition. "Knowing," said St. Peter, "that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." 2 Peter i. 14. "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" Zech. i. 5.

Ministers are ambassadors. Ambassadors are not for always, but for a time; and then they are sent for home.—Ministers are watchmen or centinels. Such persons stand their hour, and then are called away.

Earthen vessels are subject to knocks, and falls, and other casualties, which break them; and when once broken, cannot be made whole again. So it is with ministers. They are exempted from no disease to which others are subject. They are exposed also to the hand of violence. John the Baptist was beheaded in prison. James was

killed with the sword; Stephen was stoned to death. How many have we ourselves known with whom it hath been in like manner; and how many more have we read of in history, particularly in the Book of Martyrs!

3. Apply it to ordinances.—Preaching the word, is a vessel wherein the treasure is held. "We preach Christ Jesus the Lord." Now, what an earthen vessel is preaching! what a poor, contemptible thing to a carnal eye! "After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The matter preached appears unlikely to the carnal mind—the cross: Christ crucified; hanged at Jerusalem! Is this the Son of God the Redeemer, and Saviour? Can this man save us?—The manner of preaching is likewise to be considered. Not with gaudy strains and rhetorical flourishes, but a crucified Christ in a crucified style. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God: for I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power." It is like taking a city by blowing around it with rams' horns, as Jericho was taken; or routing an

army with lamps and pitchers, as the Midianites were routed in the time of Gideon.

The Sacraments also, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are earthen vessels. In outward appearance what despicable things! how unlikely either to hold, or to convey, the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!" Like the prophetic representation of the Redeemer's reception in the world, it may be said, "they have no form nor comeliness;" and when we see them, "there is no beauty that we should desire them."

As to Baptism—The outward element is water, and that sprinkled. A common, ordinary thing. We do it to ourselves every day. Yet this is to signify and seal our engrafting into Christ, our partaking the benefits of his redemption.

As to the Lord's Supper—By giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death should be shewed forth, and the worthy communicant receives the Lord Jesus. What an earthen vessel is here, and what treasure is in it! Have you not found it so? As a piece of wax at the bottom of a deed; as a turf, or twig, or morsel of clay, in giving livery and seisin of land or house, look like poor things, but, being appointed for such a purpose, they become great things. Under the law, the vessels were gold, but then that in them was the blood

of bulls—incense. *Now*, the vessels are earthen, and that in them is the blood of Christ.

4. Apply it to the present places of our assemblies — houses, barns, stables.—These may be looked upon as earthen vessels, despicable and contemptible; but if in these at any time, here or anywhere else, God cause the light of the knowledge of his own glory to shine into our hearts, shall we not have cause to be thankful? *

III. The reason why the precious treasure of the Gospel is put into earthen vessels, is, that "the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

In other places it is thus expressed, "That no flesh should glory in his presence," 1 Cor. i.

* After Mr. Henry was turned out from Worthenbury, he fitted up an out-building belonging to him, where public worship was duly performed to the time of his death. Once, preaching in it, he had this remark: "How often have we heard people, as they have passed along the road, cursing this our meeting-place! But our comfort is, that *the curse causeless shall not come*, Prov. xxvi. 2 — shall do us no harm."—*Manuscript.*

His answer, to those who turned it to his reproach that his meeting-place had been a *barn*, is well known: "No new thing," would he say, "to turn a threshing-floor into a temple." To quicken people to diligence and liveliness in the worship of God, he would sometimes observe, "That the temple was built upon a threshing-floor, a place of labour."—*See his Life*, chap. X.

29;—"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," 1 Cor. ii. 5.

If we had the treasure in golden vessels, we should look more at the golden vessel than at the treasure. But God will have the *treasure* looked at: he will himself have all the glory of man's conversion, edification, and salvation. There is every reason why this should be so. "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

If he had so pleased, he could have employed angels in preaching the Gospel; but he hath not: "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." No: for then *they* would have had the praise; but now silly man must do it, and what hath he to glory in? It is not man, but *God*. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." Ps. viii. 2. "And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied." Acts

iii. 12, 13. When David, a young stripling, with a sling and a stone, must kill great Goliah; when one Judge must destroy the enemies with an ox-goad, and another with the jaw-bone of an ass; when the Redeemer, by dying, destroys death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil—who will not say it is *the Lord's* doing? Let it be marvellous in our eyes.

Use I. There are several good lessons that we, who are *ministers*, may learn from hence. Though we are teachers, we should be learners also; we have *need* to be so.

We should learn what *we are*. We are earthen vessels.—Have we considered this? When God was sending Jeremiah upon a great errand, he bid him go "down to the potter's house, and there," said he, "will I cause thee to hear my words." We are never in a more likely frame to receive messages from God, than when we have taken a turn awhile at the potter's house. "Then," it is added, "I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the hand of the potter, so are ye in

my hand, O house of Israel." Jer. xviii. I pray, sirs, let us consider our frame, and what we are made of, that we forget not ourselves.

We should learn what we *should be.*

1. We should be very humble and low in our own eyes. We should abase ourselves, and carry it accordingly—every day, in every thing, both towards God and towards men. It is true, to consider we carry treasure, especially such treasure, there is danger of being puffed up. But then, to consider that we are but earthen vessels, and that what we carry is not our own—we have nothing but what we have received—it should humble us. "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7.—Our *office*, I own, we are to magnify; so Paul did, Rom. xi. 13; but ourselves, as he, we are to vilify—less than the least of saints—the chief of sinners—nothing. Agathocles*, the son of a potter, when advanced to be a king, would

* Agathocles, king or tyrant of Sicily, was one of the most extraordinary men of the age in which he lived. By his great talents and activity he was elevated from humble circumstances to a throne. He was the son of Carcinus, a potter of Rhegium, in Italy. He had greatness of mind enough not to be ashamed of his low origin; and at public entertainments, when his guests were served out of gold and silver, he was accustomed to eat from earthenware, as most suitable to a potter.—*Aikin's Gen. Biog.* vol. I. p. 78.

have no plate at his table, but only earthen cups, to mind him of his original.

2. Though we are but earthen vessels, we should be clean vessels. We should be purged and purified from the corruptions that are in the world through lust. There was a laver at the Temple-door for the priests to be daily washing in. We have as much need as they. "In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21. —We are earthen vessels, but we should not be *earthly* vessels, minding earthly things: such are enemies to the cross of Christ. "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."

It is prophesied concerning Gospel-times, "Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them." Zech. xiv. 21. O that it were so! And methinks this should be one motive,—because of the holy treasure we

carry, lest we make that contemptible; as Eli's sons. 1 Sam. ii. 17, 24.

3. Then we, of all men, should live in love and peace with one another. We should not fall out and knock one against another, lest we be broken to pieces one of another: for then the precious liquor we carry is spilled, the treasure spoiled, religion blemished, and our ministry scandalized. I would I could speak loud enough to be heard as far as London in this matter. We suppose there were several ministers in each of the seven churches, but they are all, of each church, written to as one angel: — as an *angel*, to teach them purity; as *one*, to teach them unity.

4. We should therefore be very busy in our work as ministers. A small matter will break us to pieces: it is but taking a cold and falling sick, and we are gone, as others before us. "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. This was Peter's inference. Calvin* was accustomed to say, "*Vultis*

* Doctor John Calvin, the justly-celebrated and evangelical Reformer, died at Geneva, May 27th, 1564, aged 55.—See his life by Mackenzie, a valuable and pleasing work, in which is contained various testimonies to his uncommon worth.

ut me Dominus inveniat otiosum?"—Are ye willing that my Lord should find me unemployed?—I am apt to think that the diseases and death of some laborious ministers, both old and young, especially *young*, hath been a stumbling-block to many, and encouraged them to let the reins loose to sloth and idleness, for fear of shortening their days. Fair and softly, they say, goes far. But will they read Matt. xvi. 25? "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it."

And now, my brethren and fellow-labourers, we have one reason more to be busy, from the death of this aged, worthy minister of Christ, whom we have laid to-day in the dust. We have now one less to help us in our work; in our watching, preaching, praying work. It is said, when a limb is cut off, the other limbs gather strength from it. I wish this may be our case as to the present bereavement. And seeing I have here made mention of him, let me here recommend his example to you in a few things as a minister.

(1.) In his choosing to suffer rather than sin.—We should all do so—ministers especially. But did he so? Yes, deliberately, and upon good advice, and never changed his mind to his dying day. And when was it? μέγας γενόμενος, as was said of Moses. "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of

Pharaoh's daughter." When he was come to years! Not a child, weak and ignorant; not old, when apt to doat; but in the prime of his age, between thirty and forty. In the year 1662, at the fatal Bartholomew-day, he was one of the number that chose to beg their bread rather than wound their consciences. God only knows how we may yet be tried some other way. But when we "see we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

(2.) In the choice of his subjects which he ordinarily preached on.—I had an opportunity of hearing him often, and I observed that his preaching was most commonly about the main matters of the Gospel—"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He preached about conversion—pardon of sin—justification — regeneration — reconciliation. And should not we go and do likewise? Would it not be more to edification, than to spend our time and yours in controversies and impertinencies?

(3.) In the very low and mean opinion that he had of himself and of his own performances.—He thought all he did was nothing: it was well if it were not sometimes in the extreme. This is a possible case: it was so in two instances concern-

ing Peter:—" When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Luke v. 8. " Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter said unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." John xiii. 6—8.

(4.) He was a man of a very tender spirit. He had a heart of flesh. He was very apt to receive impressions, especially from guilt, whether his own or others. I have known, when he hath thought he had done amiss, what brokenness of heart would appear! how much he would be affected! And should it not be with us in like manner? Would it not become us?—I enlarge no further. A word to the wise is sufficient.

Use II. But, my brethren, the inhabitants of this neighbourhood, and members of this society, I have a few errands also to you upon this sad occasion, from this text.

1. As to ministers in general.

(1.) Are they earthen vessels? See them to be so; reckon them to be no otherwise. " Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of

Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." You yourselves are so also: a small knock may dash in pieces the youngest and strongest of you. Therefore, be not unready.

(2.) Have these earthen vessels such precious treasure; and have they it for *you?* Then deal for it. You cannot buy it, at any rate, too dear: no, though you part with your all for it. Be drawing water out of these wells of salvation, sucking at these breasts, while ye have them. And the rather, because their continuance with you is so uncertain. They are passing away. "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." John xii. 35, 36. "He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." John v. 35.

(3.) Hath God ordered it so, that himself may have the praise? Let him have it on all occasions. If you profit at any time, and get good by any minister, give God the glory of it: we are willing you should, nay, desire you would. We shall not think that lost that goes beside us to him.

2. As to this earthen vessel that is now taken from you, and gone to his earth.

(1.) Bless God that you *had* him; that you had

him *so long;* and that you had him to the last in some measure of usefulness. He was, as few ministers are, not without honour even in his own country. He was born among you, the son of a minister; bred among you, lived almost all his time among you, and now died among you. God would have it so, that he should be wholly yours; and I hope it was that you might be the Lord's.

(2.) Bewail your unprofitableness under his ministry. You had him at liberty; you had him under restraint. You had him preaching; you had him silenced. When other people had not theirs, through the banishing act, you had yours; you had him. The magistrates that then were had such a deserved respect for him, that they never removed him. But the quere is, What have you profited? Were you not careless, and heedless, and heartless, and under the means of grace barren and unfruitful? You are called this day to repentance. Beg pardon of it in the blood of Christ.

(3.) Bethink yourselves of some of those many good lessons which he taught you in the course of his ministry. Talk of them to one another; talk of them to yourselves. Look over your sermon notes. Do not deal with them as with waste paper. The day is coming that you will either thank God for them, or heartily wish you had

never written them. It may be said of him, and of every deceased godly minister, as was said of Abel, that " being dead, he yet speaketh." His sermons speak still to you that heard them. Let the speaking be to purpose. " We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."

SERMON XVI.

2 CHRONICLES XXX. 8.

—And serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

THIS is the last of the duties mentioned in the verse before us, and the rest are all in order to this.

It is to this especially that the argument is annexed, though it belongs to all the rest. If people would cease to be stiff-necked, and would serve God—if they would yield themselves, and serve God—if they would enter his sanctuary, and serve him; all would be well; his fierce anger would be turned away. Oh, then, see it to be your great concern, "And serve the Lord your God."

DOCTRINE. That we must serve the Lord our God.

It is absolute duty incumbent upon every one of us to serve God. It is the main matter; it is the one thing needful. Without it, all is nothing.

We have no other way left us to escape both wrath present, and wrath to come. So that my errand to-day is to propose a service to you—especially to those of you that are young, and fit to go to service; that are standing idle in the market-place, because no man hath hired you. I am sent to-day to hire you, and shall manage my discourse accordingly.

But I must first ask you a question or two.

1. Are you out of service? Are you free? Hath no one hired you already? Hath none been before me? I doubt there has.—Are you not the servants of sin? "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." John viii. 34.—Are you not serving divers lusts and pleasures? "We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."—Are you not yielding your members to unrighteousness? "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"—Has not the devil, that "citizen of the country," been before me? Are you not feeding his swine? see Luke xv.—feeding swinish lusts; serving your own belly? Rom. xvi. 18. Are you not led captive by him? sold to him, as Ahab? "The ser-

vant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."—Are you not serving mammon—the world, gain? For certain, by nature, it is thus with every one of us. We are *born* the *servants* of *sin*. The world, the flesh, and the devil, have the rule over us. O be convinced of this, that so it is. Let plain Scripture convince you, that, till you are Christ's servants, you are the devil's servants.

2. Say—Are you weary of this service? Would you leave it, and make a change? I am sure there is reason you should. Consider,

How many masters you have.—Few folks, if they could choose, would have more than one; and one is enough. But, *sinner*, thou hast *many*. One bids thee go this way, and another that. You serve *divers* lusts and pleasures.

Consider what vile masters they are.—The devil, the grand master, is a firebrand of hell, and past all hopes of ever being otherwise: thou art in a capacity of being a child of God, and an heir of heaven. Fleshly lusts are only for the body: shall the soul be drudge to the body? Gold is

but yellow earth, and silver white earth, dug out of the ground; and shall *these* be thy *masters?*

Consider how insatiable and unreasonable these masters are.—They never say, Thou hast done enough—sit down and rest. But, Still serve on.

Consider what wages they pay.—None in hand. "What *fruit* had ye then," asks the Apostle, "in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" Rom. vi. 21. "Have no fellowship with the *unfruitful* works of darkness." Eph. v. 11.—They pay worse than none hereafter; "for the wages of sin is *death*." Rom. vi. 23. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James i. 15.

Now lay all this together, and shew yourselves men.—'But if I am sin's servant, I must not run away: it is the character of an upright man, that "he sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not."' Such *wicked* covenants must be broken. "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement: when the overflowing scourge shal pass through, it shall not come unto us—" But observe what follows: "And your agreement with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." Isa. xxviii. 15, 18.

3. Will you accept of a good motion? I can shew you another sort of service to that you are engaged in, a far better than that is. It is *God*'s service—" Serve the Lord your God." I say to you, as Joshua did to Israel, " If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Josh. xxiv. 15. O say as they said: " And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods. We will also serve the Lord; for he is our God." ver. 16, 18. It is your consent to be his servants that makes you his servants. Joshua set up a stone, and it was under an oak, to be witness. " And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God." ver. 26, 27. Shall I do likewise under the *Broad Oak?** What say you? Do you renounce the

* The place of his residence, and where this sermon was preached.

devil, the world, and the flesh, and all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world? Will you come into God's family, and lay your neck under his yoke? Say, "O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name." Isa. xxvi. 13. "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips. Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy."

'But stay, sir: give us leave first to ask you some questions.'—With all my heart; and I shall answer you faithfully and truly out of the word of God.

1. 'Who is this Lord God, whom you would have us to serve?'

The great Jehovah, blessed for ever; King of kings, and Lord of lords—therefore his service will be no disparagement to you. The same that made you, maintains you, nay, hath redeemed and bought you with the blood of his Son, and that for this very end: "That we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life"—therefore you are obliged to serve him. You are to

be the Redeemer's servants. Joshua frightened Israel: "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God: he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins." Joshua xxiv. 19. But I must say otherwise to you: your Master is your kinsman, bone of your bone, meek, and merciful: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zech. ix. 9. He is but one, not many. He is your Friend: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends." Nay, he is your Father, and will call you children: "Be ye separate, saith the Lord, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Now, how comfortable is it to serve a *father!* "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a father spareth his own son that serveth him."

2. 'What is his work?'

It is noble, excellent, choice work. Such as the highest angel may stoop to do, and be seen doing without disparagement. Our service of

God is two-fold. The service of *immediate worship*. Alone—with others—sanctuary service, as here: "Enter into my sanctuary." You must every day come before him, and converse with him; speak to him by prayer, hear him speaking to you by his word; sit down with him at his table, and there eat of the dainties of heaven; sing his praises upon all occasions: and one whole day in a week is purposely set apart for this service. It is also a service of *universal obedience*. You must deny all ungodliness, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world; walk in love; love your Master with all your heart and soul, and all your fellow-servants as yourselves. And what harm is there in this? What is it you are afraid of?

3. 'What help shall we have?'

Whatever help you have need of: it shall be had for asking. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. iv. 16. If you are called to pray; "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 26. If you are called to suffer for his sake, you shall be "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffer-

ing with joyfulness." "As your day is, so your strength shall be."

4. 'What if we fail and come short in our duty; must we be turned off presently?'

No; your Master is one that is not extreme to mark what is done amiss, but bears and forbears. You must come and confess your fault, and crave forgiveness, and you shall have it. There is an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who always appears as an Intercessor in heaven for his servants. His blood is *atoning* blood.——'May I not keep in with *some* of my old masters?' No; with no one of them.

5. 'What wages shall we have? Are there any perquisites to be looked for?'

There are both. Perquisites in possession: the smiles of his face, the visits of his love, the testimony of a good conscience. "In keeping his commandments there is great reward." Ps. xix. 11. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee." Ps. lxxxiv. 4. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." Ps. xxxvi. 8.—There are wages in reversion: a crown, a kingdom. "Henceforth," saith St. Paul, "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Now these questions are thus answered, shall we come to a point? What say you? Is it a bargain? Are you agreed? Will ye, from this day forward, be the Lord's servants, to honour, and serve, and please him in all things? Then tell him so. "O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant." Ps. cxvi. 16. "For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." Micah iv. 5. And be sure you do it, not in word only and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth, deliberately, sincerely, freely, and for ever. And having done it, having yielded yourselves, and thus entered into his sanctuary, let me next lay before you some few plain, scriptural directions what you are to do, and how you are to carry it in his service, that you may receive from him that sweet sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

1. You must look upon yourselves to be now no longer your own, but his whose servants you are.—I say *his*, to all intents and purposes: all you are, soul and body. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. vi. 20. All you have—your estate, whether it be little or much: your time: all you can: your parts, your interest. Your Master's turn must be first served before your own or any one's else:

"Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." *First*, every day, in every thing. Now, shall it be so?

2. You must get to be well acquainted with the word of God.—Love it, and let it dwell richly in you. In your Bible, your Master hath caused to be written both what you must do, and what you shall have. Nothing more is to be added. This we are to count a great mercy. He hath put no power into the hands of our fellow-servants, either to add or diminish. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

3. You must go often to your Master by prayer.—One would think his mind were we should do nothing else, by his bidding us to pray continually. Go to him for guidance and direction: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." It is promised, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

Go to him for strength and assistance. "Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us." Ps. lxviii. 28. "O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble." Isa. xxxiii. 2.

Go to him for success and a blessing. "Let the beauty of the Lord our God * be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

Go to him in the name of Jesus Christ for pardon for all our amisses. Himself hath taught us as to ask daily bread; so daily pardon. And having penitently asked it in the name of Christ, we are bound to believe we have it; and in the comfort thereof walk watchfully and cheerfully with him, and before him. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

4. You must never be seen without the badge and livery of the family upon you, that it may be known, by all you converse with, whose servants you are.—Now that badge or livery is *humility*. You must be clothed with it. 1 Pet. v. 5. Think meanly of yourselves: in honour prefer others. It is also *love* to all your fellow-servants. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John xiii. 34, 35. It is an unbecoming thing to hear the servants of a family quarrelling one with another. We should serve with one shoulder.

* "His favourable countenance, his gracious influence, and glorious presence."—*Poole.*

5. If we be buffeted at any time for our faults, we must take it patiently. If for doing well, joyfully.—Sometimes the former happens. The Master is angry, corrects and chastens. Say, The Lord is righteous: it is less than I deserve. Sometimes we do *well* and suffer wrongfully; we are reproached, and reviled, and evil-entreated. No marvel: the best servant our Master ever had—Jesus Christ—was so used. In that case we must be glad and rejoice. "*Blessed* are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. *Rejoice*, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matt. v. 11, 12. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [or trials]; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." James i. 2, 3.

6. Take heed, that in nothing, at no time, you be either a shame to, or ashamed of, either your Master, or his service and family.—Not a shame to your Master or his service, by loose and careless walking: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Phil. iii. 18, 19. "There

were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2. Be not ashamed of your Master. There is no cause why you should. "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Mr. Herbert *, when he mentioned Christ, added, my *Master*. So Paul: "There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve."

7. We must do what we can for the *honour* of our Master; and when we have done all, say, We are unprofitable servants.—Do all we can, according to the talents we are entrusted with: "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." Rom. xii. 11. "Therefore, my beloved

* Mr. George Herbert was born April 3d, 1593, near Montgomery, and died in the year 1635. He was buried at Bemerton, near Sarum, of which parish he was Rector. He is well known as a poet and a divine, as a considerable scholar, and a very holy man.—See his Life by Walton, and Middleton's *Biog. Evang.* vol. III. p. 48.

brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. xv. 58. Say still, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Luke xvii. 10. For so it is. Why should we not say the truth?

SERMON XVII.

ROM. xiii. 13.

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying *.

I HAVE had occasion lately to mention four sins that are very common and prevailing among us at this day, and I hesitate not to say they are all four scandalous sins—dishonesty and drunkenness, uncleanness and unquietness.

I have since then found them all in the same order in which I placed them, in one and the same verse of Scripture; and the one just read is it.

Here is one word, which is made use of by the blessed Apostle as an argument to enforce his exhortation, to be opened; and that is, "*as in the day.*" As if he had said, Ye are in the day; there-

* It is said St. Austin was converted by reading this passage.—See his Life.

fore shun dishonesty, drunkenness, uncleanness, and unquietness.

'What does he mean by "As in the day?"' He means, As it becomes those to do who enjoy the Gospel; that name the name of Christ, and are called Christians. He explains himself ver. 12: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand"—that is, the night of the Old-Testament dispensation, then almost at an end, when the time of Jerusalem's ruin did approach. "The day is at hand," that is, the times of the New Testament.

'They were come before he wrote this.' True, they were so; but as the Gospel gained ground in the world, it came more and more. Or rather, *hath approached*, that is, appeared. "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men."—'And what then?' Why, then let us look about us, and conform ourselves to Gospel times; "let us cast off the unfruitful works of darkness;" "let us walk honestly, as in the day."

DOCTRINE. Gospel-time is day-time.

When the Gospel comes among a people, day comes. Till then, they are in the dark: 'tis nigh with them. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

Now the quere is, How is it with us? It is *day*, certainly. We are not of the night, but of the day. 1 Thess. v. 4, 5. The inference is, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day." There are people at this day in the world with whom it is night yet. Even in our own land and nation there are many, too many, that sit in darkness. But with us it is *day-time*.

I shall shew the truth of the assertion and apply it.

What kind of time is day time?

1. A day, is limited time; and the limits of it are narrow and short. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." When once it is come, it is quickly gone. Some days are longer than others: there are summer days and winter days; but the longest day hath an end. Twelve, or fourteen, or sixteen, or eighteen hours, which is the longest with us, are quickly gone. And so it is with the Gospel—not in itself; it is called everlasting, and so it is, Rev. xiv. 6; but in respect of its stay with us. We have it, but it is only for a while. The Jews had it; the seven churches of Asia had it; but it is gone. And what an argument should this be with us to improve it while we have it; to walk worthy of it! "Go to the ant, thou sluggard: consider her ways, and be wise: which provideth

her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." Prov. vi. 6, 7, 8. Besides that the Gospel may be taken from us, we may be taken from it—by sickness, by death. Or it and we may be together, and no blessing: "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

2. A day is light time.

'So is the night too sometimes, when the moon and stars shine, or when candles are lighted up.' But it is not *as in the day:* the light that makes day, is sun-light, which far excels all other lights. Now the Sun is our Lord Jesus Christ. Mal. iv. 2. He arose in his incarnation, resurrection: he arose when openly and publicly preached to every creature under heaven. So that the light that makes this day, is the glad tidings of redemption and salvation by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, revealed to us in the books of the New Testament. The church of the Jews had something of it made known to them before, but it was in types and shadows. It was not absolutely dark: no; the moon shone: but the Sun-light they had not, as we have now. And it is growing: "The shining light shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Now day-light time hath four properties.

1. It is discovering time. — We see things better, far better, more plainly and more clearly, by the light of the sun in day-time, than we can by any other light: so, by the light of the Gospel, things hid from ages and generations are now made manifest, so that he that runs may read. "We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts."

(1.) It is manifest that the God with whom we have to do is a just, and holy, and righteous God; hating sin with a perfect hatred; punishing it wherever he finds it: and therein he is true to his threatenings. This was revealed before, but not as it is now. In the sufferings of Christ, as in a crystal glass, it appears more than ever. Though Christ was God's own, only Son, dearly beloved; though the sin he died for was none of his, but ours; yet "it pleased the Lord to bruise *him*." All the records of former judgments, inflicted on sinning angels, the old world, Sodom and Gomorrah, Adam and Eve, Nadab and Abihu, do not demonstrate the evil of sin as this does. Then, we that are of the day, and are told this, should stand in awe and not sin. We also should learn to hate it as he doth. We should upon all occasions

give him the glory of this glorious attribute of his, and speak thereof to his praise.

(2.) It is manifest that he hath a dear and tender love and regard to poor man, sinful man, even beyond what he had to fallen angels, though they by creation were far the more excellent parts of his workmanship. This appears by the sunlight of the Gospel. We that are of the day see it—in that he would part with his Son out of his bosom to redeem *us*, and not them. And how to redeem us? By being made man—by suffering and dying! "What is man, that thou art mindful of *him;* and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Then we are bound to be very thankful to him, to tell of it to his praise. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Then we are bound to love him that hath first loved us. Love him, and be willing to part with all for his sake.

(3.) The day-light of the Gospel shews us a new name by which to call him in all our addresses to him. He hath many names in the Old Testament—the Maker of heaven and earth; the Former of all things; the God of the spirits of all flesh; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—but in the New Testament he is called the God and *Father* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: "My Father and your Father, my God and your God." O sweet name!—like ointment

poured forth. With what boldness and confidence, then, may we go to him upon all occasions; not only as to our Father, for so he is by creation; but as Christ's Father, and ours in him.

(4.) The light of the Gospel discovers a new plea: what to say for ourselves when we come for the pardon and forgiveness of our sins; or to ask any thing at the hands of God that we have need of.—'What should we say, but plead the mercifulness of his nature, and the freeness and fulness of his promises?' Those are good pleas, it is true, and very encouraging, but those alone are not sufficient: we have a *better* plea—Christ hath died, and merited that pardon. Christ is risen again and had his discharge: his blood has satisfied God's justice, and bought what we want for us. So that now *justice* is our *friend*. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Then upon all occasions use this plea, and abide by this plea.

(5.) The light of the Gospel discovers what the new covenant, or bargain, is that we are under.

"We are not under the law, but under grace." Rom. vi. 14. It is, in one word, grace, free grace—a word that drops honey like the honey-comb. When I shall have told you the terms you will say so.

Is it not of grace, if nothing shall be required of us but what shall be wrought in us and for us? Certainly it is. Now that is the bargain. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. ii. 13.

Is it not of grace, if honest endeavours shall be accepted for complete performance? "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not;" that is, when we do as well as we can, and would do better, but cannot, that *would* shall serve.

Is it not of grace, if, though we fall and sin daily, if we daily repent and get up again, and come to God in the name of Jesus Christ, it shall be forgiven and passed by?

Then let us understand the terms which we are upon with God in and through Jesus Christ. It is a promised mercy: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will *shew them his covenant*." Hath he shewn it you? Our ignorance of it is a bar to our comfort, and peace, and joy, more than we are aware of.

Let us, in God's name, take the comfort of it

upon all occasions, though the devil and unbelief contradict and gainsay. It is the will of God that his people should be a comforted people, and it is in the covenant that their comfort lies—that is, as an appointed means of it; as a conduit-pipe for the conveyance of it: the fountain head is Christ. This covenant is sealed in our baptism, and sealed at the Lord's table.

(6.) The light of the Gospel sets before us a new example, or copy, which we are to write after. There were many excellent patterns before, of several kinds, but none like this—I mean, the example of the blessed Jesus. 2 Pet. ii. 21. They were famous for some one thing; he, for *every* thing. They had each of them their blot in one kind or other; but he in nothing. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Let it be so in perfect holiness. "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Heb. vii. 26. He fulfilled all righteousness. He always did the things that pleased his Father. But can we do so? We can endeavour it, and press after it. The child cannot write so well as his master, yet he must aim at it.

Let it be so in profound humility. The like to him for that, the sun never saw. He, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,

and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. John xiii. 2, &c. Now let us also study this grace, and practise it better.

Let it be so in universal love and charity. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." Eph. v. 2. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." He loved all, though one only lay in his bosom—even enemies—so must we. When you are walking in strife and envy, think, is this becoming those that are in the day? Either love one another, or give over calling yourselves Christians.

Let it be so in unconquerable patience. None ever had such variety of exercises as he had. And how did he bear them? "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously." O that we, that are in the day, would take out this good lesson. We have occasion.

(7.) The light of the Gospel discovers a new way of worship, different from what was before.

Before the rising of the Sun of righteousness, their way of worship was a carnal, outside way—by burnt-offerings and sacrifices — slaying oxen and killing sheep. But since then, no more of that. "God is a spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." And whether is better — night, or day; darkness, or light; shadow, or substance; a lamb, or a broken-hearted prayer; a bullock, or a hearty thanksgiving? We have now but three significant ceremonies, instead of a hundred, which they had—these are, bread, and wine, and water. And these all *signifying* by a Divine institution. When the like can be said concerning other ceremonies, we shall think better of them than now we either do or can. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

(8.) The light of the Gospel discovers a new and fuller account of things not seen,—rewards and punishments in the other world. We see more concerning the day of judgment: who is to be the Judge—Jesus Christ;—in what manner the process will be carried on, from Matthew xxv. We see there what will be the sentence on the wicked: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." We learn there what will be the sentence on the

righteous: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Our Saviour Jesus Christ hath "abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

But,

2. Day-light is doing time.

They that sleep, sleep in the night. When it is dark, there is no working. During the time of the Egyptian darkness none stirred from his place. But as soon as day dawns,

> "Man goes forth with cheerful mind,
> "His labours to begin;
> "And plies his work of ev'ry kind,
> "Till ev'ning calls him in." PSALM civ.

It is in the day that people are busy, each one as his calling is. And now it is Gospel day-time, what doth the day call for? Saith it not, Up, and be doing? Work, work: "God is the Lord which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." Ps. cxviii. 27. Work the work of God: work out your own salvation. Our faith must be shewn by our *works*, not by our sloth and idleness. Though, after all, we are unprofitable servants, yet *servants* we are, and must ply our Master's business. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in

the grave, whither thou goest." Eccl. ix. 10. Do it while the day of life lasts.

3. The day is walking time.

Those that have journeys to go, go in the day, not in the night. In the day they can see their way, not in the night. They can see the snares and stumbling-blocks that are in their way, which they cannot see in the night.—Now, we have all a journey to go, a *long* journey, and of great consequence and concernment — from earth, shall I say? nay, from hell, to heaven. And what time is it; day or night? Not night, blessed be God: if it were, what would become of us? No, no: it is day, clear day, sun-shine day. Is it so? Then lift up your feet in the way. "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." See that you walk circumspectly. Your way is in most things plain: you know you should not be dishonest, drunken, unclean, and unquiet. It is true there are snares and stumbling-blocks; but it is *day*, and you may see and avoid them, if you take heed. Races are run in the day-time: "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside

every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

4. Day time is warm time.

The night is not only dark, and therefore unfit for working and walking; but it is cold also, and chilly. And no marvel: the sun is away, whose bright beams should warm the air. So it is spiritually. Christ, the Sun of righteousness, is risen, and shines yet in our horizon; and there is healing under his wings: healing for poor sin-sick souls; comfort for poor dejected people. The Spirit is in the pouring out, to quicken and to comfort.

Three things do usually trouble us.

(1.) The guilt of past sins.—'Oh,' says one, 'you cannot imagine what I have done, nor how vile I have been.' And is there any debt so great which this Surety cannot pay? "He is able to save them to the *uttermost* that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hast thou been a blasphemer, a persecutor? Such have obtained mercy.

(2.) The burden of present inward corruptions, and of present outward calamities.—'Oh,' says another, 'I have a hard heart, a froward spirit.' And is there not a promise? "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within

you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Ezek. xxxvi. 26.—'Oh,' says a third, 'my losses press me down—an unequal yoke-fellow, disobedient children, unkind relations: my name is blemished.' And dost thou love God? Then all is working for good. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory." The sting is out. The rod is in a *Father*'s hand.

(3.) Fears for hereafter.—One is afraid for his soul, lest one day he perish by the hand of his enemies: lest, if tempted and tried, he should draw back. Fear not: you shall be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation."—Another is afraid lest he should want necessaries, and knows not what he shall do when old. Be of good comfort. He that hath provided, doth and will provide. There is a promise: "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

To conclude—There is a two-fold coldness.

1. Of grace and duty.—Beware of that. Beware of cold praying, cold love, cold obedience. Walk in the sun—it is *day*-time.

2. Of comfort and joy.—Beware of that also—"though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the

trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

SERMON XVIII.*

2 PETER i. 5.

Add to your faith, virtue.

WE have here a list or catalogue of choice and excellent Christian graces. They are in number eight; just the number of the beatitudes. Matt. v.

The exhortation is, to add them one to another; or, as the word signifies, to lead them one after another, as in a dance.

They are things that should not, indeed that cannot, go alone; but where one is, all should be: they should be joined hand in hand.

The first of them is faith; which stands in the front, and leads the van in this blessed troop; the first link in this golden chain; the foundation-stone, as it were, of all the rest; to which all the

* Mr. Henry's last sermon, preached at Broad Oak, on Lord's-day, June 21, 1696. He died on the Wednesday following.—See *his Life*, chap. IX. See also p. 371 of this Volume.

rest in order are to be added. And that which immediately follows, is virtue. By which is meant, either a virtuous life and conversation (—virtue is put for universal righteousness, including our whole duty to God and man)—or courage and greatness of spirit: Ἄρης, *Mars*. But the first of all is faith; *and to that, this virtue must be added.*

DOCTRINE I. That Faith is the leading grace of all graces.

Shew I. What this faith is.

II. Prove it to be a leading grace.

III. The application.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, *faith*." Here, faith is put last. "Above all, taking the shield of *faith*." In this connection, faith is put in the midst. In the text, *faith* is put first. Faith is the main of all—the alpha and the omega in religion.

For the first. What is faith?—Faith hath many significations in the Scriptures, especially these—all agreeable enough to the scope of the exhortation.

1. It signifies our profession of Christianity.

"He hath denied the faith" (1 Tim. v. 8), that is, his profession as a Christian. He doth that which is unworthy the name he bears, the calling wherewith he is called. "Examine your-

selves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."

For the second. Prove it a leading grace.—Now this is at the bottom of all the rest in godliness. There must be an owning of the Christian profession—we must be in the faith. Though every professor be not a godly man, yet every godly man must be a professor. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. x. 10.

There are many that are called Christians, and are baptized into the Christian faith, that are like to perish everlastingly, because they do not depart from iniquity. But it is in vain to look for any departing from iniquity—that is, upon right grounds, and for right ends—among those that are not Christians. To seek for them among Jews, Turks, Pagans, is to seek for the living among the dead: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" The tree must be good ere the fruit can be good. All the world besides is wilderness, desert: the Church only is the garden, wherein, though many weeds, yet all the good plants that are, are in it. We should therefore bless God that we are in the profession of the right faith. But take heed of resting there: add, add virtue.

2. Faith signifies our persuasion of the truth of Divine Revelation.

The things revealed in the Scriptures are great things. The Bible is a book of revelations, concerning the being and perfections of God;—concerning the undertaking, incarnation, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, and our redemption by it;—concerning the benefits of the covenant of grace, pardon, reconciliation, adoption;—concerning the unseen things of the other world; hell, heaven.

These truths we are to believe; and the ground of our believing them is, because God hath revealed them. He hath told us so, and so it is: and he is Truth itself, and cannot lie or deceive us; and therefore we may safely assent to it, even to every word and tittle that he hath spoken.

And this belief is the foundation of all. We cannot *come* to God without it. Heb. xi. 6. The Deists, so called, are against it. Nor can we *please* him without it.

It is not said, Add to reason, virtue; but, Add to *faith*, virtue. Therefore see that this foundation be laid; that your assent be given to the word of God; and that it have these four properties:

(1.) That it be sincere and upright, inward and hearty, upon right grounds — not in word and tongue only. Many can say their Creed, and say they do believe, that yet do but say so. "With the heart man believeth unto righteous-

ness." "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

(2.) That it be spreading and universal—Not to some, but to all Divine revelations; one as well as another. Because the same *truth* is engaged in *all*. As in the Commandments: "Whosoever shall keep the *whole* law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

(3.) That it be stedfast and firm — "established in the faith"— not loose and wavering; to-day assenting, to-morrow doubting. Not but that there may be doubts; but, then, they are our weakness, and we are to bewail it, and labour against it.

(4.) That it influence the life — be operative and fruitful: that we "add virtue" to it. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." James ii. 14, &c. "By *faith*, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of

his house: by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. xi. 7. We believe He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Do we seek him?

3. Faith is the grace by which we receive, and rest upon Christ for salvation.—"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John i. 12. It is our hand, by which we take him; our mouth, by which we feed upon him; our foot, by which we come to him; our eye, by which we look unto him.

Faith fastens on the whole circumference of Divine Revelation — especially on the centre, Christ. To be sure this is a main matter; all depends upon it.

We can have no union with Christ without it. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts *by faith*." Eph. iii. 7. By the door of faith Christ comes into the soul.

We can have no justification without faith. "Being justified *by faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 1.

Without faith we can have no sanctification. "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are

sanctified *by faith* that is in me." Acts xxvi. 18. "Purifying their hearts *by faith*." Acts xv. 9.

We have no strength to do, or to suffer, without faith. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for *without me* ye can do nothing." John xv. 5.

Without faith we can have no comfort. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace *in believing*, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Rom. xv. 13.

Without faith we can have no life—no salvation. "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that *believe* to the saving of the soul." Heb. x. 39. "Receiving the end of your *faith*, even the salvation of your souls." 1 Pet. i. 9. "He that *believeth*, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Mark xvi. 16.

4. There is a faith of assurance.—This is the soul's reflex act, whereby, having received Christ Jesus the Lord, we *know* that we have received him, and are satisfied in ourselves that we are accepted through him, that our sins are forgiven, and that we shall be eternally saved.

There is certainly such a faith: "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." Though it be not that by which we are justified, as some have thought, yet it follows upon it; not in all always, but where God gives it, and that is,

where it is duly sought and laboured for. We are bid to press after it: "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." Heb. vi. 11.

Now this also is a leading grace. Many other graces, in the act and exercise of them, depend much upon it:—Love to God: "We love him because he first loved us." Obedience before him: "For we *know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." Holy joy in him, and thankfulness to him, likewise depend upon the possession of this faith.

Use 1. This should advance our esteem of the grace of faith. The Apostle calls it, in the chapter whence the text is taken, "precious faith." ver. 1. Faith is a precious, most precious grace.

2. We should see to it, as a main matter, that our faith be right. If we miss there, we miss in the foundation, and then the building cannot stand.

3. We should pray, "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke xvii. 5); that the world may be overcome, Satan's darts quenched.

DOCTRINE II. That to our faith we must add virtue—that is, a virtuous conversation.

Ἀρετὴ is a word but thrice used in all the New Testament besides here: once Phil. iv. 8, "if any virtue;" again, 2 Pet. i. 3, "called to virtue;" and again, 1 Pet. ii. 9, "to shew forth the *virtues* of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

It is δύναμις, Mark v. 30, and twice elsewhere, in Luke, though translated *virtue:* yet the things signified by it — endowments of mind inclining and disposing us to that that is good—are called graces; fruits of the Spirit; the good work; the new nature; the Divine nature; the new man; holiness; righteousness.

Though the Heathen Philosophers insist so much upon it in their ethics, where they treat at large of virtues—of *cardinal* virtues; justice, prudence, temperance, fortitude; and of other virtues of a lower rank, but very necessary and useful towards the making man a good citizen, husband, father, friend—I say, though *they* insist so much upon virtue, we must not therefore discard and disclaim either word or thing, but do as the Israelites did by the gold and silver and jewels of the Egyptians, turn them to sanctuary uses; or as the captive maid, see Deut. xxi. 10, 11. Refine and elevate what they commend: in respect of

principle: they treat of virtue from mere nature; we from grace, from the Spirit of God. In respect also of the *end:* let us speak of virtue, not as they do, to set up themselves, but to advance God. Water rises no higher than the spring-head whence it comes.

The contrary to virtue is vice. As, for instance, the contrary to justice is oppression; to meekness, passion; to humility, pride. "Add to your faith, virtue."

So that the meaning is: All that have faith "must deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world; not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God."

In this sense virtue is used in the Old Testament: "All the city of my people doth know that thou art a *virtuous* woman." Ruth iii. 11. "Many daughters have done *virtuously,* but thou excellest them all." Prov. xxxi. 29. We must excel in virtue.

But why must we to faith add virtue, that is, a virtuous conversation?

1. That our light may shine before men. Matt. v. 16. Faith is an inward, unseen thing; it is only to be beheld by its *fruits.* Now if men see our good works, they will glorify God. "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers,

they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." 1 Pet. ii. 12—iii. 16. Therefore, "these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." Tit. iii. 8. See James ii. 18.

2. That we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. Tit. ii. 10. The doctrine of God our Saviour is virtuous doctrine, enjoining that which is good, and forbidding that which is evil. If we walk contrary to this, it reflects upon our Teacher. O Jesus! are these thy Christians! If we walk according to the doctrine of God, it adorns the Gospel of the Redeemer.

3. That we may prove our faith to be right. It is dead if it work not: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." James ii. 17. Then be exhorted. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." 1 John ii. 3—7. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that

doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matt. vii. 21.

Paul and James—the one arguing for justification by faith, the other by works—are to be reconciled by distinguishing of a two-fold justification; before God, and before the world; or by considering the several dispositions of the persons they wrote to *.

"Add to your faith, virtue," that is, courage or fortitude, magnanimity, greatness of spirit.

DOCTRINE III. Believing people should be courageous people.

"The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion."

Shew I. What this virtue or Christian courage is.

It is a grace of the Spirit, whereby we are enabled to carry it aright, and as we ought, in all things, without giving way to prevailing fears or fearfulness.

It is a grace of the Spirit.—There is a natural

* As to the apparently contradictory assertions of the Apostles St. Paul and St. James, the reader may be referred to the Abridgment of Dr. Owen's admirable Treatise on "Justification by Faith," by the Rev. G. Burder, chap. XXIII. p. 194, &c; and to "Social Religion Exemplified," edited by Dr. Ed. Williams, edition 1786, p. 368.

courage and boldness flowing from mere nature, steeled and edged with mere moral considerations. This that I speak of is another thing. The Apostles were never bold till after the day of Pentecost, (see Acts ii.) when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them. Before, they forsook Christ, and sneaked, and denied him; but then they boldly confessed him: see Acts iv. and v. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

It is a grace of the Spirit helping us; against fear.—Fear is apt to prevail over us, sometimes on one account, sometimes on another; but courage helps against them. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence: he will come and save you."

Shew II. Wherein we must be courageous.

(1.) In believing, "add to faith, virtue"—that is, when you have a promise, stick stoutly to it, notwithstanding all discouragements. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word; in God I have put my trust: I will not fear: what can flesh do unto me?" Ps. lvi. 3, 4. Venture on Christ, though your sins are many and great.

(2.) In prayer.—"Let us come boldly to the

Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. iv. 16. As Jacob, let us wrestle with God: "And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh: and he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Gen. xxxii. 26. Hence he had the name of Israel, a prince with God. As the woman of Canaan, let us persevere: "Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith! be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Matt. xv. 28. Let us, as the widow mentioned in Luke xviii. be importunate. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

(3.) In doing our duty.—Good works are always opposed; and the better they are, the greater the opposition from within, and from without. But we must not therefore stop; we must press forward. Like Nehemiah: see Nehemiah vi.

(4.) In bearing afflictions, especially when they come for righteousness' sake.—What a brave saying was that of Paul! "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts xxi. 13. How courageous were the three children, when called to bear their testimony to the truth! see Daniel iii. How brave were the primitive saints! Hebrews xi. "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small," Prov. xxiv. 10—thou hast but little virtue.

(5.) In reproving sin, when God calls us to it.—How courageous was John the Baptist in reproving Herod! "John said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee"— no, not for thee, though Herod the Great—"to have thy brother's wife."

Ministers of the Gospel have need of this virtue. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." Isa. lviii. 1. "But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin." Mic. iii. 8.

(6.) In resisting temptations from the devil, the world, and the flesh.

These are, all, the enemies of our souls; and we must manfully fight against them, according to the covenant of our baptism, under Christ's banner*. See Joshua i. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James iv. 7. "Whom resist stedfast in the faith." 1 Pet. v. 9. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness;

* For "a rational and devout improvement of Christian baptism," see Mr. Matthew Henry's "Treatise on Baptism," abridged from the original Manuscript by the Rev. Thomas Robins, 1783; and Dr. Williams's Antipædob. Exam. vol. II. chap. 6, in which there are copious extracts from Mr. Henry's work.

and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." Eph. vi. 11, &c. We may observe, there is no armour for the *back*. We must resist even unto blood (Heb. xii. 4), that is, though we suffer for it.

(7.) In dying.—To die, is a work by itself—to be done but once; and therefore need be well done. David says, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Ps. xxiii. 4. Though an enemy, it is a disarmed enemy—the sting is taken out*: and it is the last enemy.

* In a letter, dated Dec. 20th, 1687, addressed to H. Ashhurst, Esq. Mr. Henry thus wrote:

"There are six things, the firm belief whereof will exceedingly promote our comfort in dying.

"1. That at what time soever, and in what way soever, death comes, it comes by the will and appointment of our heavenly Father. He cuts no corn of his down till it is fully ripe. Job v. 26. Rev. xi. 7.

"2. That death hath no sting in it to them that are in Christ Jesus. How doth Paul exult over death and the grave! 1 Cor. xv. 56.

Shew III. Why believers should be courageous.

(1.) Because faith engages God on our side.—If God be for us, who shall be against us? He is strong to help, strong to support. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Heb. xiii. 5, 6. "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." 2 Kings vi. 16.

(2.) Because faith assures us of a rich reward before us, for all our pains in doing, our patience in suffering.—This animated Moses: "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy

"3. That, to them that fear the Lord, immediately beyond death is heaven. Luke xvi. 25. Phil. i. 23.

"4. That the body will certainly rise again a glorious body. 1 Cor. xv. 43.

"5. That God will certainly take care of poor disconsolate relations left behind. Ps. xxvii. 10. Jer. xlix. 11. This helped to make Jacob's death comfortable to him, Gen. xlviii. 21; and Joseph's, Gen. l. 24.

"6. That God will certainly accomplish and fulfil, in due time, all the great things that he hath prepared and promised concerning his church and people in the latter days." *Manuscript.*

the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompence of reward." It also frightens with unseen misery in case of sin, and folly, and fearfulness: "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Use 1. See what cause we have to be humbled in the views of past guilt as to this matter. How little virtue, how little courage, have we manifested! What bad effects have followed! How it hath weakened others! After Peter had denied Christ, the others forsook him.

2. Beg of God, for time to come, to work this grace in us—this spiritual manhood and greatness of spirit. It is much seen in despising the glories of this world.

Nil nisi peccatum timeo, that is, I fear nothing but sin. "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him."

THE SUBSTANCE

OF

A SERMON

PREACHED

At Broad Oak, on Wednesday, the 8th of July, 1696,

on occasion of

THE DEATH

OF THE

REV. PHILIP HENRY, A. M.

BY

HIS SON,

THE REV. MATT. HENRY.

SERMON

BY THE

REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

1 COR. XV. 55.

O death, where is thy sting?

DYING words commonly make living impressions; especially the dying words of faithful ministers and dear relations. This was one of the last words of our late translated prophet, left as a legacy to us that survive. It was his support in a dying hour. When the affliction abounded, this was then consolation*.

* Mrs. Savage, Mr. Henry's eldest daughter, was a woman of eminent piety and attainments, and remarkable for filial affection, and, indeed, every Christian grace. The following extracts from her diary are affecting.

"Sabbath, June 21, 1696. — My dear father preached his last sermon on 2 Pet. i. 5: *Add to faith, virtue.*—(See p. 350.)

"On Tuesday, after family prayer in the morning, he began to be unwell with his usual pain, like the stone

It is part of the improvement Paul makes of the doctrine of the Resurrection, which some de-

and cholic, which increased all day. He became worse and worse; and weak nature not able to grapple with it, about one o'clock in the night he quietly breathed out his soul into the embraces of the blessed Jesus.—A sad stroke!—In the morning, June 24th, the heavy tidings came to us. And what shall I say or do? I shall go softly all my days in the bitterness of my soul. But *God* is a father that never dies. O that I could renew my hold of *him*, and never let it go!—I have lost—I cannot express it—my Father! My father!—as well a *spiritual* as a natural father. I would keep down passion, and not mourn as one that hath no hope. But it is hard. I shall go to him: I hope to be where he is.—His last words were, '*O death, where is thy*——;" but through anguish of death he could not utter the whole sentence. Oft in the afternoon he cried out, 'I faint, I am dissolved! Come, blessed angels, do your office.' To some young ones in the family, who came to see him, he said, 'O do not put off your great work till you come to dying circumstances.' To dear brother he said: 'You are engaged in a good work. Follow peace and holiness, and let the world say what they will.' When they asked his blessing, he said, 'The Lord bless you, and all the rest of my dear children, with spiritual blessings in heavenly places by Christ Jesus.' Another time he said, 'I groan, but I do not grumble. My stroke is heavier than my groaning. O for virtue, virtue!'—meaning courage*.—Our crown is fallen. Woe unto us that we have sinned! 'How is the gold become dim, the fine gold changed!' 'Shall I not, from this time, cry unto him (viz. God), My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?' My best guide on earth is removed to heaven: what shall I do to follow him by heavenly mindedness? 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

* Alluding to his last Sermon.

nied, see verse 12. Paul not only argues it, but makes use of it. That truth we are most likely to hold fast which we taste the sweetness of.

Paul often speaks of a Christian's joy *in hope:* "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 2;—"Rejoicing in hope," Rom. xii. 12. He speaks, too, of a Christian's joy in *believing:* "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Rom. xv. 13. In hope of things not seen. As in the text: "O death, where is thy sting?" He is so sure of the victory that he triumphs before the battle. This explains Rom. viii. 37: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that

"On Saturday, June 27th, we were at the funeral at Whitchurch, laying up the dear remains, as in a bed of spices, till the resurrection of the just. Before we came out, Mr. Tallents preached in the chapel at Broad Oak, from Rom. viii. 23. His funeral was attended by most of the neighbouring gentry, with a vast multitude of others. His body, sown in tears, shall rise again with joy; but for which hope, the stroke were not to be borne. To-day is this Scripture fulfilled; 'Those that honour me I will honour.'

"Wednesday, July 8th, dear Brother preached the lecture at Broad Oak, from those last words of our dear deceased father, 'O death, where is thy sting?'"

From the original Manuscript.

Mrs. Savage was born Aug. 7th, 1664; and died, at West Bromwich, in Staffordshire, at the house of her daughter, Mrs. Wittou, Feb. 27th, 1752, æt. 88.

loved us." Paul was in deaths oft, 2 Cor. xi. 23: "For we which live, are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh," 2 Cor. iv. 11;—"As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter," Rom. viii. 36. Paul saw death in pomp and terror—death envenomed with the rage of hell. Looking upon things with an eye of sense, surely death had never, to any, more of sting in it; and yet,

1. He speaks as one *despising* death—making nothing of it. In dealing with an enemy, it has been looked upon as unwise to despise him: yet Paul was so sure of the victory that he despises the enemy. "There we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers; and so we were in their sight." Numb. xiii. 33. Paul's unwearied labours, and his exposing of himself to danger, shew that he despised death.—They that despise the *world*, despise death. Allusion to Isa. xi. 8.

2. He speaks as one *defying* death. Death, do thy worst! He perfectly hectors the king of terrors; tramples upon him; sets his foot upon his neck. This was the man whose bodily presence was weak; that was every where spoken against. Thus could he do all things, through Christ strengthening him. Phil. iv. 13.

He speaks thus in reflection upon Christ's victory over death: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." As if he had said, Thou art disarmed by Christ.—This is trampling upon one that was fallen.

He speaks thus in prospect of his own victory over death, in virtue of Christ's: "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," ver. 57 — in dying, and at the resurrection.

DOCTRINE. That it is the unspeakable privilege of all true believers, that death to them hath no sting in it.

The death of the saints is unstung.

1. Our distresses in this world are death: and those have no sting in them. "Now therefore," said Pharaoh, "forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me *this death* only." Exod. x. 17. Death is the wages of sin, Rom. vi. 23; that is, all calamities. But to the saints they have no sting: there is honey upon the rod. It

is not an evil, an only evil — no pungency; no poison. It is correction, but not in wrath. Ps. vi. 1.

2. Our departure out of this world is death: and that has no sting in it to true believers. *That* is here spoken of. There is no avoiding the stroke; but it is not as when a serpent striketh a man. No; the pain, the peril, is gone: the "bitterness of death is past."

Shew I. What is this sting of death which is taken out.

1. The sting of death is *sin:* and that is pardoned. Sin is the κέντρον that stimulates and stirs up death to do its office. If sin be taken away, thou shalt *not die.* "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord: and Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die." 2 Sam. xii. 13. Death is quite another thing. "And the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Isa. xxxiii. 24. "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." Isa. xxxviii. 17. Pardon of sin is a foundation-privilege, whence all the rest flow, living and dying: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." The subduing of ini-

quity is the subduing of death. Sin is the wormwood and the gall: "Thou writest *bitter* things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth."

2. The sting of death is the *terror of conscience:* and that is quieted. This is the sting that pricks to the heart—conscience reproaching, flying in our faces. The blood of Christ purges the conscience from that which is the cause of all these pricking pains: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" See what was the sting of death taken out in Hezekiah: "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." 2 Kings xx. 3. In Paul: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

3. The sting of death is the *wrath of God:* and that is removed. To be taken away in wrath, is death *with* a sting, Ps. lviii. 9: "For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled," Ps. xc. 7 and 11. This kills with death, Rev. ii. 23. Now God's anger

is turned away. It is the wrath of the King of kings that is as messengers of death. We are by *nature* children of *wrath*. Eph. ii. 3. But we are *saved* from wrath by Christ. The curse, is wrath bound on. " Christ hath *redeemed* us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

4. The sting of death is *hell* on the other side death: and from this they are delivered. When death came, hell followed. Rev. vi. 8. That is the sting in the tail, though to secure sinners death has the face of a man. Allusion to Rev. ix. 7, 10. The saints are delivered from the wrath to come. 1 Thess. i. 10. They shall not be hurt of the second death. Rev. ii. 11.

Shew II. What is the effect of this unstinging of death.

1. Death is become a *conquered* enemy. All his armour, wherein he trusted, is taken from him. Luke xi. 22. An enemy to nature, but conquered and put under our feet. If death be unstung, it cannot hurt us—it is quite disabled to do us any *real* damage. It cannot separate us from the love of God: " I am persuaded that neither *death*, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Observe, death is put first. It cannot despoil us of our graces and comforts, which are our true treasure. Though it take hold of the body for a while, yet that is not for ever: "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children."

2. Death is a *covenant-friend.* Here is meat out of the eater—the spoil divided. Death is yours. 1 Cor. iii. 22. It is the period of all the saints' sorrows: it is their passage to joy. It is one of the best friends they have, next to Christ. It frees them from sin, howbeit he meaneth not so—(allusion to Isa. x. 7) Christ has so over-ruled and ordered the matter.

Shew III. How comes the sting of death to be taken out.

1. It is done by the death of Christ virtually. He is the death of deaths: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Hos. xiii. 14. Where is the sting of death? It is sticking in the

side of our crucified Saviour. He felt the sting of death — *tasted* death. Heb. ii. 9. He *drank* of the bitter cup. And, which was the main matter, he *rose* again. *Then* he broke the power of death—loosed the pains of death. Acts ii. 24. Death could not hold him. Death had leave to do its *worst* at Christ, and was baffled.

2. It is done by the life of faith effectually, and with application to us. Christ overcame death, and yet to multitudes it has still a sting. It is faith that unstings death as to us. "The just shall *live* by his faith"—even in a *dying* hour. By *faith*—as it quencheth Satan's fiery darts, Eph. vi. 16; as it purifies the heart, Acts xv. 9; as it overcomes the world, 1 John v. 4; as it looks unto Jesus: "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

Uses.

I. Get death unstung.

If you would have the comfort of this, as other saints have had in a dying hour, you must be followers of them. Aim at the best gifts and graces. We must needs die, and are concerned to prepare. The great thing to be done is, to secure an interest in Jesus Christ by faith. But, besides that, there are some other things that help to do it more and more.

1. A conscience kept void of offence. Acts xxiv. 16. Those that *yield* to sin can never *tri-*

umph over death. Though delivered from the *sting* of death—the eternal damnation being pardoned: yet you may find *some* sting in it.

2. A meek and quiet spirit. As much wrath, Eccl. v. 17, so much sting. A cool spirit is an excellent spirit. Moses, the man famous for meekness, died easily. Deut. xxxiv. The meek increase their joy. Isa. xxix. 19. "My soul," said David, "is even as a weaned child." Psalm cxxxi. 2.

3. A heart weaned from the world. Death has a sting in it to the worldling. Luke xii. 20. But Christians may say, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." If your portion be laid up within the veil, you may say, Death, do thy worst!

4. Diligence in doing the work of life. *Omissions* may be a sting in death*. They that take

* "The last words the very excellent Archbishop Usher was heard to utter, were these; praying for forgiveness of his sins, he added, '*But Lord, in special forgive my sins of omission.*' Herein he had his wish, which he often used, that he might die as holy Mr. Perkins did, who expired crying for mercy and forgiveness.

"But did *he* pray for pardon of his sins of *omission?* And yet he was a person that was never known to omit an

pains all day will rest best at night. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

II. Deal with it *as* unstung—as to others, as to ourselves.

1. Familiarise death to you. Converse with it as with one that there is no danger of. "I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister." The ancients had their sepulchres in their gardens.

2. Fear it not when at a distance. Heb. ii. 15. Never balk a duty, nor make bold with sin, for fear of death. "But none of these things move me," said St. Paul, "neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

3. Faint not when it comes to the setting-to.

hour, but was always employed in his Master's business, either in preaching, reading, writing, or hearing others read to him; either resolving doubts, or exhorting, instructing, and counselling such as came to visit him: yet did he die with this humble expression; *Lord, forgive my sins of omission:* a speech that may give us all matter of solemn meditation and imitation."—See *his Life by Dr. Parr* (who was his chaplain), and *Clark's Lives*, folio.

" Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Ps. xxiii. 4. Be of good courage in a dying hour. Death may hiss, but it cannot hurt *.

* Mrs. Savage, in her Diary, thus writes:—

" 1696. July 20. Dear brother came to us, and preached next day from Exod. xv. 2: *He is my father's God, and I will exalt him.* He was so in respect of *duty*. He was the God my father chose; the God my father served; the God my father trusted in. He was my father's God to the end: he died in his love, in his service, in his embraces.

" He was my father's God in respect of *privilege*. He was graciously present with my father while he lived: he hath taken him to be graciously present with himself, now he is removed from us.

" How shall I exalt God as my father's God? By praising him for his mercies to my father; by pleading with him from those mercies; by acceptance of him to be my God; by adhering to him even unto the end."

Manuscript.

FINIS.

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